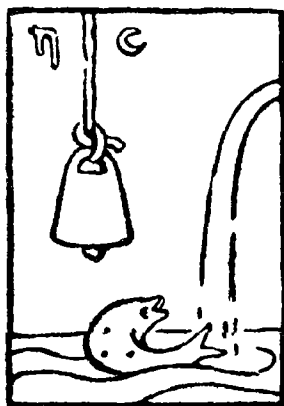


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ESSAYS
BY W. B. YEATS.
1931 TO 1936



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PREFACE

In this book I have put whatever critical essays I have written since the war, except those in *Wheels and Butterflies*, the long introduction to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, and one or two notes rather than essays that seemed too slight in effort or in achievement. Nothing in this book is journalism; nothing was written to please a friend or satisfy an editor, or even to earn money. When I introduced a book it was some book I had awaited with excitement; nor was anything written out of the fullness of knowledge; why should I write what I knew? I wrote always that when I laid down my pen I might be less ignorant than when I took it up. I think my head has grown clearer.

The poem about Parnell was first published in a *Cuala Broadside* a few months ago, but the essay is new. *Modern Poetry* was broadcasted from the London B. B. C. in October of last year. *Bishop Berkeley* introduced Rossi and Hone's life of that writer published in 1931. *My Friend's Book* was published in *The Spectator* in April 1932. *Prometheus Unbound* and *Louis Lambert* in *The Spectator* and *The Mercury* three or four years ago, in what month I cannot recall. *An Indian Monk* and *The Holy Mountain* in 1932 and 1934 as introductions to books bearing those names, and the *Introduction to a short Upanishad* in *The Criterion* in 1935.

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PARNELL.

In the late Eighties I read in the newspapers that an Oxford undergraduate, Henry Harrison, had been tried, and whether condemned or acquitted I do not remember, for some gallant reckless action at an eviction in Donegal. Years afterwards I came to know him slightly, met him perhaps half a dozen times. Two or three weeks ago he walked into my garden, a man broken by time, and sat by my wheeled chair. He had, I knew, a life-long devotion to Parnell's memory, had helped his widow and children with legal and financial advice, had been asked to write an official "Life" which was never written. He brought me his book *Parnell Vindicated* and asked my help to make it known in Dublin; Ensor, in his book *England, 1870-1914* had spoken of it as "the main, final source of information," but Irish newspapers had ignored it, seemed to prefer the story told in the undefended divorce case of a seduced wife and a deceived husband. I asked what I could do, for who listened to a poet until he was dead, but he insisted that words of mine would reach somebody or other he could not. A couple of days ago the verses at the end of this note came into my head, and I thought that they might suggest to somebody that there was nothing discreditable in Parnell's love for his mistress and his wife.

Parnell Vindicated proves beyond controversy that when Parnell met her Mrs. O'Shea was "a free woman"; that while a rich old woman lived she could not seek divorce; that Captain O'Shea knew of their liaison from the first; that he sold his wife for money and for other substantial advantages; that for £20,000, could Parnell have raised that sum, he was ready to let the divorce proceedings go, not against Parnell, but himself; that he extracted money from Parnell and Parnell's widow; that a well-known book signed by her, but only here and there her work whenever it put him in a better light was "forgery . . . no less hurtful to Parnell's honour" than the Piggott Letters; that the Irish leaders knew all about the liaison after a certain election in the middle Eighties if not sooner; that the Liberal leaders knew from May 1882 when Sir William Harcourt told the Cabinet, apparently upon the evidence of his detectives.

I was once enough of a politician to contemplate politics ever since with amusement. The leading articles, the speeches, the resolutions of the shocked Irish and English politicians, the sudden reversal of all the barrel-organs, the alphabets running back from Z to A, syphophtic fiction become libel, eulogy vituperation, what could be more amusing? Henry Harrison does not ask if Gladstone knew and

his biographers deny it. I have no doubt that he did; he used Mrs. O'Shea as an intermediary while negotiating with Parnell. Levison Gower, after consultation with Lord Granville, drew his attention to the rumours, but Gladstone, who, in Mr. Ensor's words "shared with many Victorians a dislike to hearing or repeating scandal, treated this as idle gossip." But he must have heard more than rumours from the mouth of his own Home Secretary in 1882. A great Victorian once said to me "There are things that may be done but never spoken of." Gladstone was in his private life, what he could not be in his public, a tolerant man of the world. Wilfrid Blunt brought him to see a well-known courtesan, the "Esther" of the sonnets, and Gladstone, charmed by a charming woman, returned alone some days later with no profligate intention but to present forty pounds of tea. They were all tolerant men of the world except the peasant born Irish members; toleration is most often found beside ornamental waters, upon smooth lawns, amid conversations that have no object but pleasure. But all were caught in that public insincerity which was about to bring such discredit upon democracy. All over the world men are turning to Dictators, Communist or Fascist. Who can keep company with the Goddess Astrea if both his eyes are upon the blinded cat?

I cannot however look upon Captain O'Shea as merely amusing. I am not sufficiently unselfish. He has endangered the future of Irish dramatic literature by making melodrama too easy, and I am a theatre director; for drama one must imagine, and I cannot imagine what Captain O'Shea thought of himself when he looked into the mirror. The complacent husband may have charm and dignity like the old French painter who called upon some friends of mine to say that he was taking his wife into the country for a change: "I always knew that Persian lover would turn out badly, I do hope she will choose better next time", and then two or three years later to say he had falsified her age upon her tombstone: "She never liked people to know her age." But what of the complacent husband who is "in effect a black-mailer" (Ensor, page 565) and yet is such a dashing figure that a Cabinet Minister considering a duel consults him upon the point of honour? There is something interesting there, but too much is left to the imagination. Those who knew him in his vigorous years are underground or over ninety.

COME GATHER ROUND ME PARNELLITES.

Come gather round me Parnellites
And praise our chosen man;

Stand upright on your legs awhile;
Stand upright while you can
For soon we lie where he is laid
And he is underground.
Come fill up all those glasses
And pass the bottle round.

And here's a cogent reason,
And I have many more,
He fought the might of England
And saved the Irish poor;
Whatever good a farmer's got
He brought it all to pass;
And here's another reason,
That Parnell loved a lass.

And here's a final reason,
He was of such a kind
Every man that sings a song
Keeps Parnell in his mind,
For Parnell was a proud man,
No prouder trod the ground,
And a proud man's a lovely man
So pass the bottle round.

The Bishops and the Party
That tragic story made,

A husband who had sold his wife
And after that betrayed;
But stories that live longest
Are sung above a glass;
And Parnell loved his country,
And Parnell loved a lass.

August, 1936.

MODERN POETRY: A BROADCAST.

The period from the death of Tennyson¹⁹² until the present moment has, it seems, more good lyric poets than any similar period since the seventeenth century — no great overpowering figures, but many poets who have written some three or four lyrics apiece which may be permanent in our literature. It did not always seem so; even two years ago I should have said the opposite; I should have named three or four poets and said there was nobody else who mattered. Then I gave all my time to the study of that poetry. There was a club of poets — you may know its name, “The Rhymers’ Club” — which first met, I think, a few months before the death of Tennyson and lasted seven or eight years. It met in a Fleet Street tavern called “The Cheshire Cheese”. Two members of the club are vivid in my memory: Ernest Dowson, timid, silent, a little melancholy, lax in

body, vague in attitude; Lionel Johnson, determined, erect, his few words dogmatic, almost a dwarf but beautifully made, his features cut in ivory. His thought dominated the scene and gave the club its character. Nothing of importance could be discovered, he would say, science must be confined to the kitchen or the workshop; only philosophy and religion could solve the great secret, and they said all their say years ago; a gentleman was a man who understood Greek. I was full of crude speculation that made me ashamed. I remember praying that I might get my imagination fixed upon life itself, like the imagination of Chaucer. In those days I was a convinced ascetic, yet I envied Dowson his dissipated life. I thought it must be easy to think like Chaucer when you lived among those morbid, elegant, tragic women suggested by Dowson's poetry, painted and drawn by his friends Conder and Beardsley. You must all know those famous lines that are in so many anthologies:

Wine and women and song,
To us they belong,
To us the bitter and gay.

When I repeated those beautiful lines it never occurred to me to wonder why the Dowson I knew

seemed neither gay nor bitter. A provincial, conscious of clumsiness and lack of self-possession, I still more envied Lionel Johnson who had met, as I believed, everybody of importance. If one spoke of some famous ecclesiastic or statesman he would say: "I know him intimately", and quote some conversation that laid bare that man's soul. He was never a satirist, being too courteous, too just, for that distortion. One felt that these conversations had happened exactly as he said. Years were to pass before I discovered that Dowson's life, except when he came to the Rhymers' or called upon some friend selected for an extreme respectability, was a sordid round of drink and cheap harlots; that Lionel Johnson had never met those famous men, that he never met anybody because he got up at nightfall, got drunk at a public house or worked half the night, sat the other half, a glass of whiskey at his elbow, staring at the brown corduroy curtains that protected from dust the books that lined his walls, imagining the puppets that were the true companions of his mind. He met Dowson, but then Dowson was nobody and he was convinced that he did Dowson good. He had no interest in women, and on that subject was perhaps eloquent. Some friends of mine saw them one moonlight night returning from 'The Crown' public house which had just closed, their zigzagging feet requiring

the whole width of Oxford Street, Lionel Johnson talking. My friend stood still eavesdropping; Lionel Johnson was expounding a Father of the Church. Their piety, in Dowson a penitential, sadness, in Lionel Johnson more often a noble ecstasy, was, as I think, illuminated and intensified by their contrasting puppet shows, those elegant, tragic penitents, those great men in their triumph. You may know Lionel Johnson's poem on the statue of King Charles, or that characteristic poem that begins: "Ah, see the fair chivalry come, the Companions of Christ". In my present mood, remembering his scholarship; remembering that his religious sense was never divided from his sense of the past; I recall most vividly his "Church of a Dream":

Sadly the dead leaves rustle in the whistling wind,
Around the weather-worn, grey church, low down
the vale:
The Saints in golden vesture shake before the gale;
The glorious windows shake, where still they dwell
enshrined;
Old Saints by long-dead, shrivelled hands, long since
designed:
There still, although the world autumnal be, and
pale,
Still in their golden vesture the old Saints prevail;
Alone with Christ, desolate else, left by mankind.

Only one ancient priest offers the Sacrifice,
Murmuring holy Latin immemorial:
Swaying with tremulous hands the old censer full of
 spice,
In grey, sweet incense clouds; blue, sweet clouds
 mystical:
To him, in place of men, for he is old, suffice
Melancholy remembrances and vesperal.

There were other poets, generally a few years younger, who having escaped that first wave of excitement lived tame and orderly lives. But they, too, were in reaction against everything Victorian.

A church in the style of Inigo Jones opens on to a grass lawn a few hundred yards from the Marble Arch. It was designed by a member of "The Rhymers' Club," whose architecture, like his poetry, seemed to exist less for his own sake than to illustrate his genius as a connoisseur. I have sometimes thought that masterpiece, perhaps the smallest church in London, the most appropriate symbol of all that was most characteristic in the art of my friends. Their poems seemed to say: "You will remember us the longer because we are very small, very unambitious". Yet my friends were most ambitious men; they wished to express life at its intense moments, those moments that are brief because of their

intensity, and at those moments alone. In the Victorian era the most famous poetry was often a passage in a poem of some length, perhaps of great length, a poem full of thoughts that might have been expressed in prose. A short lyric seemed an accident, an interruption amid more serious work. Somebody has quoted Browning as saying that he could have written many lyrics had he thought them worth the trouble. The aim of my friends, my own aim, if it sometimes made us prefer the acorn to the oak, the small to the great, freed us from many things that we thought an impurity. Swinburne, Tennyson, Arnold, Browning, had admitted so much psychology, science, moral fervour. Had not Verlaine said of "In Memoriam", "when he should have been broken-hearted he had many reminiscences". We tried to write like the poets of the Greek Anthology, or like Catullus, or like the Jacobean Lyrists, men who wrote while poetry was still pure. We did not look forward or look outward, we left that to the prose writers; we looked back. We thought it was in the very nature of poetry to look back, to resemble those Swedenborgian angels who are described as moving forever towards the dayspring of their youth. In this we were all, orderly and disorderly alike, in full agreement.

When I think of "The Rhymers' Club" and grow weary of those luckless men, I think of another circle

that was in full agreement. It gathered round Charles Ricketts, one of the greatest connoisseurs of any age, an artist whose woodcuts prolonged the inspiration of Rossetti, whose paintings mirrored the rich colouring of Delacroix. When we studied his art we studied our double. We, too, thought always that style should be proud of its ancestry, of its traditional high breeding, that an ostentatious originality was out of place whether in the arts or in good manners. When "The Rhymers' Club" was breaking up I read enthusiastic reviews of the first book of Sturge Moore and grew jealous. He did not belong to "The Rhymers' Club" and I wanted to believe that we had all the good poets; but one evening Charles Ricketts brought me to a riverside house at Richmond and introduced me to Edith Cooper. She put into my unwilling hands Sturge Moore's book and made me read out and discuss certain poems. I surrendered. I took back all I had said against him. I was most moved by his poem called "The Dying Swan".

O silver-throated Swan
Struck, struck! a golden dart
Clean through thy breast has gone
Home to thy heart.
Thrill, thrill, O silver throat!
O silver trumpet, pour:
Love for defiance back

On him who smote!
And brim, brim o'er
With love; and ruby-dye thy track
Down thy last living reach
Of river, sail the golden light . . .
Enter the sun's heart . . . even teach,
O wondrous-gifted Pain, teach thou
The god to love, let him learn how.

Edith Cooper herself seemed a dry, precise, precious, pious, finicking old maid; with an aunt, a Miss Bradley, she had written under the name of "Michael Field" tragedies in the Elizabethan manner, which I seem to remember after forty or fifty years as occasionally powerful but spoilt by strained emotion and laboured metaphor; they had already fallen into oblivion, but under the influence of Charles Ricketts she had studied Greek and found a new character, a second youth. She had begun, though I did not know it for many years, a series of little poems, masterpieces of simplicity, which resemble certain of Landor's lyrics, though her voice is not so deep, but high, thin and sweet.

Thine elder that I am, thou must not cling
To me, nor mournful for my love entreat:
And yet, Alcaeus, as the sudden spring
Is love, yea, and to veiled Demeter sweet.

Sweeter than tone of harp, more gold than gold
Is thy young voice to me; yet, ah, the pain
To learn I am beloved now I am old,
Who, in my youth, loved, as thou must, in vain.

And here is another, which because it hints at so much more than it says, is very moving.

They bring me gifts, they honour me,
Now I am growing old;
And wondering youth crowds round my knee,
As if I had a mystery
And worship to unfold.

To me the tender, blushing bride
Doth come with lips that fail;
I feel her heart beat at my side
And cry: 'Like Ares in his pride,
Hail, noble bridegroom, hail!'

My generation, because it disliked Victorian rhetorical moral fervour, came to dislike all rhetoric. In France, where there was a similar movement, a poet had written; "Take rhetoric and wring its neck". People began to imitate old ballads because an old ballad is never rhetorical. I think of *The Shropshire Lad*, of certain poems by Hardy, of Kipling's "Saint

Helena Lullaby," and his "The Looking-Glass." I will not read any of that famous poetry but a poem nobody ever heard of. When I was a young man, York Powell, an Oxford Don, was renowned for his miraculous learning, but only his few intimates, perhaps only those much younger than himself, knew that he was not the dry man he seemed. From the top of a bus, somewhere between Victoria and Walham Green he pointed out to me a pawnshop he had once found very useful; I was in his rooms at Oxford when he replied to somebody who had asked him to become Proctor that the older he grew the less and less difference could he see between right and wrong. He used to frequent prize-fights with my brother, a lad in his twenties, and it was in a Broadside, a mixture of hand-coloured prints and poetry published by my brother, and now long out of print, that I discovered the poem I am now about to read. It is a translation from the French of Paul Fort.

The pretty maid she died, she died, in love-bed as
she lay;
They took her to the church-yard; all at the break
of day;
They laid her all alone there: all in her white array;
They laid her all alone there: a'coffin'd in the clay:

And they came back so merrily: all at the dawn of
day;
A'singing all so merrily: '*The dog must have his day!*'
The pretty maid is dead, is dead; in love-bed as she
lay
And they are off a-field to work: as they do every
day.

The poems I have read resemble in certain characteristics all modern poetry up to the Great War. The centaurs and amazons of Sturge Moore, the Tristram and Iseult of Binyon's noble poem — there were always some long poems; my Deirdre, my Cuchullain had been written about for centuries and our public wished for nothing else. Here and there some young revolutionist would boast that his eyes were on the present or the future, or even denounce all poetry back to Dante, but we were content; we wrote as men had always written. Then established things were shaken by the Great War. All civilised men had believed in progress, in a warless future, in always-increasing wealth, but now influential young men began to wonder if anything could last or if anything were worth fighting for. In the third year of the War came the most revolutionary man in poetry during my life-time, though his revolution was stylistic alone — T. S. Eliot published his first book.

No romantic word or sound, nothing reminiscent, nothing in the least like the painting of Ricketts could be permitted henceforth. Poetry must resemble prose, and both must accept the vocabulary of their time; nor must there be any special subject-matter. Tristram and Iseult were not a more suitable theme than Paddington Railway Station. The past had deceived us: let us accept the worthless present.

The morning comes to consciousness
Of faint stale smells of beer
From the saw-dust-trampled street
With all its muddy feet that press
To early coffee stands. . . .
One thinks of all the hands
That are raising dingy shades
In a thousand furnished rooms.

We older writers disliked this new poetry, but were forced to admit its satiric intensity. It was in Eliot that certain revolutionary War poets, young men who felt they had been dragged away from their studies, from their pleasant life, by the blundering frenzy of old men, found the greater part of their style. They were too near their subject-matter to do, as I think, work of permanent importance, but their social passion, their sense of tragedy, their modernity, have

passed into young influential poets of today : Auden, Spender, MacNeice, Day Lewis, and others. Some of these poets are Communists, but even in those who are not, there is an overwhelming social bitterness. Some speak of the War in which none were old enough to have served:

I've heard them lilting at loom and belting,
Lasses lilting before dawn of day ;
But now they are silent, not gamesome and
gallant —
The flowers of the town are rotting away.

There was laughing and loving in the lanes at
evening ;
Handsome were the boys then, and girls were gay.
But lost in Flanders by medalled commanders
The lads of the village are melted away.

This poetry is supported by critics who think it the poetry of the future — in my youth I heard much of the music of the future — and attack all not of their school. A poet of an older school has named them “the racketeers”. Sometimes they attack Miss Edith Sitwell, who seems to me an important poet, shaped as they are by the disillusionment that followed the

Great War. Among her fauns, cats, columbines, clowns, wicked fairies, into that phantasmagoria which reminds me of a ballet called *The Sleeping Beauty*, loved by the last of the Tsars, she interjects a nightmare horror of death and decay. I commend to you *The Hambone and the Heart*, and *The Lament of Edward Blastock*, as among the most tragic poems of our time. Her language is the traditional language of literature, but twisted, torn, complicated, jerked here and there by strained resemblances, unnatural contacts, forced upon it by terror or by some violence beating in her blood, some primitive obsession that civilisation can no longer exorcise. I find her obscure, exasperating, delightful. I think I like her best when she seems a child, terrified and delighted by the story it is inventing. I will read you a little poem she has called *Ass-Face*, but first I must explain its imagery which has taken me a couple of minutes to puzzle out, not because it is obscure, but because image follows image too quickly to be understood at a first hearing. I prefer to think of *Ass-Face* as a personality invented by some child at a nursery window after dark. The starry heavens are the lighted bars and saloons of public houses, and the descending light is asses' milk which makes *Ass-face* drunk. But this light is thought of the next moment as bright threads floating down in spirals to make a dress for Columbine, and the next moment after that

as milk squirting on the sands of the sea — one thinks of the glittering foam — a sea which brays like an ass, and is covered because it is a rough sea by an ass's hide. Along the shore there are trees, and under these trees beavers are building Babel, and these beavers think that the noise Ass-face makes in his drunkenness is Cain and Abel fighting. Then somehow as the vision ends the starlight has turned into the houses that the beavers are building. But their Babel and their houses are like white lace, and we are told that Ass-face will spoil them all.

When you listen to this poem, you should become two people, one a sage who thinks perhaps that Ass-face is the stupefying frenzy of nature, one a child listening to a poem as irrational as a "Sing a Song of Sixpence":

Ass-face drank
The asses' milk of the stars. . .
The milky spirals as they sank
From heaven's saloons and golden bars,
Made a gown
For Columbine,
Spirting down on sands divine
By the asses' hide of the sea
(With each tide braying free).
And the beavers building Babel
Beneath each tree's thin beard,

Said, 'Is it Cain and Abel
Fighting again we heard?,
It is Ass-face, Ass-face,
Drunk on the milk of the stars,
Who will spoil their houses of white lace —
Expelled from the golden bars!

I think profound philosophy must come from terror. An abyss opens under our feet; inherited convictions, the pre-suppositions of our thoughts, those Fathers of the Church Lionel Johnson expounded, drop into the abyss. Whether we will or no we must ask the ancient questions: Is there reality anywhere? Is there a God? Is there a Soul? We cry with the Indian Sacred Book: "They have put a golden stopper into the neck of the bottle; pull it! Let out reality!"

Some seven years after the close of the War, seven years of meditation, came Turner's *Seven Days of the Sun*, Dorothy Wellesley's *Matrix*, Herbert Read's *Mutations of the Phoenix*, T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land*; long philosophical poems; and even now the young communist poets complicate their short lyrics with difficult metaphysics.

If you are lovers of poetry, and it is for such that I speak, you know *The Waste Land*, but perhaps not the other poems that I have named, though you will

certainly know Dorothy Wellesley's poem in praise of horses, and probably Turner's praise of a mountain in Mexico with a romantic name. To three, perhaps to all four of these writers, what we call the solid earth was manufactured by the human mind from unknown raw material. They do not think this because of Kant and Berkeley, who are an old story, but because of something that has got into the air since a famous French mathematician wrote "space is a creation of our ancestors". Eliot's historical and scholarly mind seems to have added this further thought, probably from Nicholas of Cusa: reality is expressed in a series of contradictions, or is that unknowable something that supports the centre of the see-saw.

At the still point of the turning world. Neither
flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there
the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call
it fixity.
Where past and future are gathered. Neither
movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point,
the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.

indignation by letter. William Morris, coming out of a hall where somebody had read or recited his *Sigard the Volsung* said: "It cost me a lot of damned hard work to get that thing into verse."

1936.

BISHOP BERKELEY

I

Imagination, whether in literature, painting or sculpture, sank after the death of Shakespeare. Supreme intensity had passed to another faculty; it was as though Shakespeare, Dante, Michelangelo, had been re-born with all their old sublimity, their old vastness of conception, but speaking a harsh, almost unintelligible language. Two or three generations hence, when men accept the inventions of science as a commonplace and understand that it is limited by its method to appearance, no educated man will doubt that the movement of philosophy from Spinoza to Hegel is the greatest of all works of intellect.

II

I delight in that fierce young man, whose student years passed when the battle of the Boyne fought, as Molyneux said, to change not an English but an

Irish crown, was a recent memory; who established with Molyneux's son for secretary a secret society to examine the philosophy of a "neighbouring nation"; who defined that philosophy, the philosophy of Newton and Locke, in three sentences, wrote after each that Irishmen thought otherwise, and on the next page that he must publish to find if men elsewhere agreed with Irishmen. What he then was, solitary, talkative, ecstatic, destructive, he showed through all his later years though but in glimpses or as something divined or inferred. It is not the fault of his biographer but of the inanimate record, or of his own inanimate pose that he is not there in all his blood and state. But after all when we search our own experience whether of life or letters how many stand solidly? At this moment I but recall four or five intimate friends, an old woman that I never spoke to, seen at a public assembly in America, an image met ten years ago in a sudden blaze of light under my closed eyelids, William Morris, and the half symbolic image of Jonathan Swift. Yet I am indebted to Joseph Hone that Berkeley moves among those images, though not with their solidity, that when the pattern has changed, when some of its elements have gone, he will still move there. Furthermore I understand now what I once but vaguely guessed that these two images, standing and sounding together, Swift

and Berkeley, concern all those who feel a responsibility for the thought of modern Ireland that can take away their sleep.

III

I hate what I remember of his portrait in the Fellows Room at Trinity College; it wears a mask kept by engravers and painters from the middle of the eighteenth century for certain admired men; Phillips' Blake, contradicted by the powerful lines of the life mask, wears it too, and the statue of the Prince Consort on Leinster Lawn; the smooth gregarious mask of Goldsmith's *Goodnatured Man*, an abstraction that slipped away unexamined when Swift and Berkeley examined and mocked its kind. The portrait attributed to Vanderbank is more amusing; the painter overpowered by the admired man turns the ecclesiastical sleeves into those great sleeves worn by Titian's women, and rounds the face to a vague half-animal Venetian loveliness. One turns one's eyes from the gods and satyrs in the background — the engraved figures are too small for my sight — to peer under the bowl of the fountain or behind the chair expecting to discover one of those little dogs brought into fashion by Venetian courtesans. I reject with less liking and equal incredulity the Berkeley come down to us in the correspondence of his day; the sage

as imagined by gentlemen of fortune — a role accepted by Berkeley that he might not be left to starve in some garret by a generation terrified of religious scepticism and political anarchy, and loved because it hid from himself and others his own anarchy and scepticism. The *Commonplace Book* is there to show that he did not accept it without hesitation or love it with his whole heart. “N. B. To use utmost caution not to give the least handle of offence to the Church or churchmen. . . even to speak somewhat well of the Schoolmen. . . ” “N. B. To rein in your satirical nature.” The something unreal about his public life made him the more attractive to his contemporaries, was an essential element perhaps of his incredible persuasiveness as if he were some hieratic image; only in those speculations, that seemed the lovable foible of a great man, is he altogether real. One looks in vain for some different life lived among friends and pupils, wonders what habits of secrecy still remained. What did he say in those three sermons to under-graduates that brought so much suspicion upon him, not perhaps what he says in the long unreadable essay upon utilitarian ethics written to save his face? Was the Bermuda project, with its learned city so carefully mapped out, a steeple in the centre, a market in each corner, more than a theme for discourse? He had left behind those earnest Fellows of Trinity College who had offered their service and

might have liked converting American-Indians — there is a Trinity College Mission to savage parts — and brought to America a portrait-painter and a couple of pleasant young men of fortune, and associated there with fox-hunters and immaterialist disciples. Or did he think that if he could stop all thought with his Utopian drug — what thinker has not felt the temptation — the mask might become real? He that cannot live must dream. Did tar-water, a cure-all learnt from American-Indians, suggest that though he could not quiet men's minds he might give their bodies quiet, and so bring to life that incredible benign image, the dream of a time that after the anarchy of the religious wars, the spiritual torture of Donne, of El Greco and Spinoza, longed to be protected and flattered. The first great imaginative wave had sunk, the second had not yet risen.

I think of my father, of one friend or another, even of a drunken countryman who tumbled into my carriage out of the corridor one summer night, men born into our Irish solitude, of their curiosity, their rich discourse, their explosive passion, their sense of mystery as they grew old, their readiness to dress up at the suggestion of others though never quite certain what dress they wore, their occasional childish worldliness. In our eighteenth century four or five such men had genius, two or three have genius today.

IV

It is customary to praise English empirical genius, English sense of reality, and yet throughout the eighteenth century when her Indian Empire was founded England lived for certain great constructions that were true only in relation to the will. I spoke in the Irish Senate on the Catholic refusal of divorce and assumed that all lovers who ignored Priest or Registrar were immoral; upon education, and assumed that everybody who could not read the newspaper was a poor degraded creature; and had I been sent there by some religious organisation must have assumed that a child captured by a rival faith lost its soul; and had my country been at war — but who does not serve these abstractions? Without them corporate life would be impossible. They are as serviceable as those leaf-like shapes of tin that mould the ornament for the apple pie, and we give them belief, service, devotion. How can we believe in truth that is always moth-like and fluttering and yet can terrify? — A friend and I, both grown men talked ourselves once into a terror of a little white moth in Burnham Beeches. And of all these the most comprehensive the most useful, was invented by Locke when he separated the primary and secondary qualities; and from that day to this the conception of a physical world without colour, sound, taste,

tangibility, though indicted by Berkeley as Burke was to indict Warren Hastings fifty years later, and proved mere abstract extension, a mere category ¹ of the mind, has remained the assumption of science, the ground-work of every text book. It worked, and the mechanical inventions of the next age, its symbols that seemed its confirmation, worked even better, and it worked best of all in England where Edmund Spenser's inscription over the gates of his magic city seemed to end "Do not believe too much:" elsewhere it is the grosser half of that dialectical materialism, the socialist Prince Mirski calls "the firm foundation-rock of European socialism", and works all the mischief Berkeley foretold.

V

The sense for what is permanent, as distinct from what is useful, for what is unique and different, for the truth that shall not prevail, for what antiquity called the sphere as distinct from the gyre, comes from solitaries or from communities where the solitaries flourish, Indians with a begging bowl, monks where their occupation is an adventure, men escaped

¹ This cannot of course be less true of time-space than of the abstract space of Newton. The Russian Mathematician Vasiliev in "Space, Time and Motion" calls Berkeley "one of the most profound thinkers of all time" and adds "It was Berkeley's immortal service that he decidedly rejected the external reality of space".

out of machinery, improvident men that sit by the roadside and feel responsible for all that exists:

Do not thou grieve or blush to be
As all inspired and tuneful men
And all thy great forefathers were from Homer
down to Ben.

Born in such community Berkeley with his belief in perception, that abstract ideas are mere words, Swift with his love of perfect nature, of the Houyhnhnms, his disbelief in Newton's system and every sort of machine, Goldsmith and his delight in the particulars of common life that shocked his contemporaries, Burke with his conviction that all states not grown slowly like a forest tree are tyrannies, found in England an opposite that stung their own thought into expression and made it lucid.

VI

If J. W. Dunne's *Experiment with Time*¹ is well

¹ J. W. Dunne's experiments are of great value, his explanation is inconsistent. No heaping up of dimensions, what is successive in a lower dimension simultaneous in a higher, can bring him to the Pure Act or Eternal Instant, source of simultaneity and succession alike. His Infinite Observer is not Infinite. Mc Taggart's exposition of a somewhat similar theory in the second volume of his "Nature of Existence" is consistent with itself and with philosophical tradition.

founded, if our nightly dreams are in part a mixture of past and future events; if with little effort we can think the like dreams awake; and my own experience supports him; I may perhaps regard the speculations of men caught in the machinery of life as mere prophecy, perhaps even suggest that we honour the prophetic afflatus before every other afflatus because it is so gregarious. Berkeley had his disciples, but they came in twos and threes, were far apart in time and place, no man until many years had passed lived the heartier because he shared their theme.

VII

Berkeley thought the Seven Days not the creation of sun and moon, beast and man, but their entrance into time, or into human perception, or into that of some spirit; that his study table when the room seemed empty existed in the mind of some spirit or went back into eternity. Though he could not describe mystery — his age had no fitting language — his suave glittering sentences suggest it; we feel perhaps for the first time that eternity is always at our heels or hidden from our eyes by the thickness of a door. Something of this depends upon his use of common words,¹ his sparing use of exact definitions,

¹ Berkeley used common words on principle. They express perception with ease, he explains in the "Commonplace Book", but not those abstract ideas he derided.

his conviction that he must as far as possible accept our point of view, upon his remaining, no matter what the theme, a conversationalist, an easy travelled man whose attention flatters us; upon those three dialogues of Hylas and Plotinus; the only philosophical arguments since Plotinus that are works of art, being so well-bred, so sensible. What does it matter when we are in such good company if Michael's trumpet blares on every threshold?

VIII

I published some pages from a diary a few years back in which this quotation occurs: "A few days ago my sister Lolly dreamed that she saw three dead bodies on a bed. One had its face to the wall, one had a pink mask like a child's toy mask, and before she could look at the third, somebody had put a mask on that too. While she was looking at them the body with its face to the wall suddenly moved. The same night J. . . dreamed that she saw three very long funerals and that she saw what she thought a body on a bed. She thought it the body of a brother of hers who had died lately. She lay down on the bed by it and it suddenly moved. The same night my sister Lily dreamed that she had received three telegrams."

I draw J. W. Dunne's attention to these dreams that he may look right and left and not merely before and behind, and I assure him that if he experiments he

will discover simultaneous correspondential reveries, as he did prophetic reveries even in waking life, that there is as much warp as woof. They may be as new to psychology as his own discoveries but that should not deter him.

The romantic movement seems related to the idealist philosophy; the naturalistic movement, Stendhal's mirror dawdling down a lane, to Locke's mechanical philosophy as simultaneous correspondential dreams are related; not merely where there is some traceable influence but through their whole substance, and I remember that monks in the Thebiad or was it by the Mariotic Sea, claimed "To keep the ramparts", meaning perhaps that all men whose thoughts skimmed the "unconscious", God-abetting affected others according to their state, that what some feel others think, what some think others do. When I speak of idealist philosophy I think more of Kant than of Berkeley who was idealist and realist alike, more of Hegel and his successors than of Kant, and when I speak of the romantic movement I think more of Manfred, more of Shelley's Prometheus, more of Jean Valjean, than of those traditional figures, Browning's Pope, the fakir-like peddler in *The Excursion*.

IX

The romantic movement with its turbulent heroism,

its self-assertion, is over, superseded by a new naturalism that leaves man helpless before the contents of his own mind. One thinks of Joyce's *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, Pound's *Cantos*, works of an heroic sincerity, the man, his active faculties in suspense, one finger beating time to a bell sounding and echoing in the depths of his own mind; of Proust who still fascinated by Stendhal's fixed frame-work seems about to close his eyes and gaze upon the pattern under his lids. This new art which has arisen in different countries simultaneously seems related, as were the three telegrams to the three bodies, to that form of the new realist philosophy which thinks that the secondary and primary qualities alike are independent of consciousness; ¹ that an object can at the

¹ This definition is taken from M. W. Catkins' "Introduction" to her selection from Berkeley. Moore in his "Refutation of Idealism", the manifesto of modern realism, merely affirmed the objectivity of the sense-data, the raw material from which mind fabricates the objects of sense. Of recent years he has however suggested that judgment may be a form of perception, and McTaggart has incorporated the suggestion in his idealistic system. Future philosophy will have to consider visions and experiences such as those recorded in "An Experiment with Time," "An Adventure" and in Osty's "Supernormal Faculties" Events may be present to certain faculties, distant in time to others. Certain investigators are convinced that they obtained through the mediumship of Mrs. Crandon the fingerprints of a man dead some twenty years; and the terms idealist and realist may be about to lose their meaning. If photographs that I saw handed round in Paris thirty years ago can be repeated and mental images photographed, the distinction that Berkeley drew between what man created and what God creates will have broken down.

same moment have contradictory qualities. This philosophy seems about to follow the analogy of an art that has more rapidly completed itself, and after deciding that a penny is bright and dark, oblong and round, hot and cold, dumb and ringing in its own right; to think of the calculations it incites, our distaste or pleasure at its sight, the decision that made us pitch it, our preference for head or tail, as independent of a consciousness that has shrunk back, grown intermittent and accidental, into the looking-glass. Some Indian Buddhists would have thought so had they pitched pennies instead of dice.

If you ask me why I do not accept a doctrine so respectable and convenient, its cruder forms so obviously resurrected to get science down from Berkeley's roasting-spit, I can but answer like Zarathustra, "Am I a barrel of memories that I should give you my reasons?"; somewhere among those memories something compels me to reject whatever — to borrow a metaphor of Coleridge's — drives mind into the quick-silver. And why should I, whose ancestors never accepted the anarchic subjectivity of the nineteenth century, accept its recoil; why should men's headache that never drank? I admit there are, especially in America, such signs of prophetic afflatus about this new movement in philosophy, so much consonant with the political and social movements

of the time, or so readily transformable into a desire to fall back or sink in on some thing or being, that it may be the morning cock-crow of our Hellenistic Age.

X

Berkeley wrote in his *Commonplace Book* — “The Spirit — the active thing — that which is soul and God — is the will alone”; and then remembering the mask that he must never lay aside, added: “The concrete of the will and understanding I must call mind, not person, lest offence be given, there being but one volition acknowledged to be God. Mem. carefully to omit defining Person, or making much mention of it.” Then remembering that some member of his secret society had asked if our separate personalities were united in a single will, a question considered by Plotinus in the Fourth Ennead but dangerous in the eighteenth century, he wrote, “What you ask is merely about a word, unite is no more.” Number had no existence being like all abstract ideas a part of language. It is plain however from his later writings that he thought of God as a pure indivisible act, personal because at once will and understanding, which unlike the Pure Act of Italian philosophy creates passive “ideas” — sensations — thrusts them

as it were outside itself; and in this act all beings — from the hierarchy of heaven to man and woman and doubtless to all that lives ¹ — share in the measure of their worth: not the God of Protestant theology but a God that leaves room for human pride. As I enumerate these thoughts I forget the gregarious episcopal mask and remember a Berkeley that asked the Red Indian for his drugs, an angry, unscrupulous ² solitary that I can test by my favourite quotations and find neither temporal nor trivial — “An old hunter talking with gods, or a high-crested chief, sailing with troops of friends to Tenedos,” and the last great

¹ Berkeley has been called a utilitarian, even the first utilitarian, and the essay on Passive Obedience would support that opinion were it more than a public plea where everything must be familiar and intelligible. In the “Commonplace Book” alone is Berkeley always sincere and there I find in paragraph 639 “Complacency seems rather to . . . constitute the essence of volition,” which seems what an Irish poet meant who sang to some girl “A joy within guides you”, and what I meant when I wrote “An aimless joy is a pure joy”. Berkeley must have been familiar with Archbishop King’s ‘De Origine Mali’, which makes all joy depend “upon the act of the agent himself, and his election;” not upon an external object. The greater the purity the greater the joy. A Sligo countryman once said to me “God smiles even when he condemns the lost”. Berkeley deliberately refused to define personality and dared not say that man in so far as he is himself, in so far as he is a personality, reflects the whole act of God; his God and Man seem cut off from one another. It was the next step and because he did not take it Blake violently annotated “Siris” and because he himself did take it, certain heads — “Christ Blessing” — in Mona Wilson’s “Life” for instance — have an incredible still energy. It was not compatible from any point of view with Berkeley’s external inanimate mask.

² I am thinking of his attack on Shaftesbury.

oracle of Delphi commemorating the dead Plotinus, "That wave-washed shore. . . the golden race of mighty Zeus. . . the just Æacus, Plato, stately Pythagoras, and all the choir of immortal love".

XI

Only where the mind partakes of a pure activity can art or life attain swiftness, volume, unity; that contemplation lost we picture some slow-moving event, turn the mind's eye from everything else that we may experience to the full our own passivity, our personal tragedy; or like the spider in Swift's parable mistake for great possessions what we spit out of our guts and deride the bee that has nothing but its hum and its wings, its wax and its honey, its sweetness and light. 'God,' 'Heaven,' 'Immortality,' those words and their associated myths define that contemplation. Philosophy can deny them all meaning, some of the greatest human works are such denial, but we think it vulgar and jejune if it do so without despair; and history shows that it must return again and again to the problem that they set. Giambattista Vico has said that we should reject all philosophy that does not begin in myth, and it is impossible to pronounce those three words without becoming as simple as a camel-driver or a pilgrim.

XII

Berkeley in his youth described the *summum bonum* and the reality of heaven as physical pleasure, and thought this conception made both more intelligible to simple men. And though he abandoned it in later life, and not merely because incompatible with the mask, one returns to it remembering Blake's talk of 'enlarged and numerous senses', his description of heaven as an improvement of sense, Lake Harris' denunciation of Swedenborg as a half man 'that half saw, half felt, half tasted the Kingdom of Heaven'. Berkeley was fumbling his way backward to some simple age. I think of the Zen monk's expectation though maybe but as an inducement to passivity, of an odour of unknown flowers as contemplation reached its climax; of the Zen painter gathering into the same powerful rhythm all those things that in the work of his predecessor stood so solidly as themselves.

When Berkeley abandoned that first opinion he did not exalt in place of perception some abstract thought or law but some always undefined apprehension of spirits and their relations. Looking for a clue I think of Coleridge's contrast between Juliet's nurse and Hamlet, remember that Shakespeare drew the nurse from observation, from passive sense-impression, but Hamlet, the court, the whole work of

art, out of himself in a pure indivisible act. There have been mystics no doubt who thought they knew by a knowledge as direct the creatures of their neighbourhood, partaking as it were the timeless act of their creation, and I once visited a Cabbalist who spent the day trying to look out of the eyes of his canary; he announced at nightfall that all things had for it colour but nothing outline. His method of contemplation was probably in error.

XIII

Forty years ago intellectual young men dissatisfied with the political poetry of Young Ireland, once the foundation of Irish politics, substituted an interest in old stories and modern peasants, and now the young men are dissatisfied again. The hereditary political aim has been accomplished; their country does not need their help; the question I have heard put again and again 'What would he sacrifice?' is put no more, everything is upside down; it is their aims that are unaccomplished, they that need help; they have begun to ask if their country has anything to give. Joseph Hone draws their attention to that eighteenth century when its mind became so clear that it changed the world.

July, 1931.

MY FRIEND'S BOOK

I

One opens a friend's book with dread, every trick of style has its associations, we wonder perpetually — such hatred is in friendship — how a man we have buckled to our heart can have so little sense. Admiration can but feed hatred, and if we have known the man for five-and-forty years and met him once a week for the last ten, and must write about his book — and what else can be so interesting? — it may seem best to touch upon some one aspect and ignore the rest. Yet, in writing about *Æ's Song and its Fountains* I cannot do so; I must face all my associations, merely stating at the outset that my hatred has won the right to call itself friendship.

II

Towards the end of my Dublin schooldays an elderly servant of my mother's took an interest in a school-boy who passed our windows daily. None of us knew his name, nor did he interest my sisters or myself or seem in any way unusual, but our servant called him "the strayed angel." Then I went to the Art schools and found him, turning his study of the nude into a Saint John in the Desert, with some reminiscence of da Vinci perhaps obstructing his sight. I soon

discovered that he possessed a faculty dormant elsewhere since the time of Swedenborg. If he sat silent for a while on the Two Rock Mountains, or any spot where man was absent, the scene would change; unknown, beautiful people would move among the rocks and trees; but this vision, unlike that of Swedenborg, remained always what seemed an unexplained, external, sensuous panorama. Another student, devout and Catholic, cried to him once in a moment of excitement, "You will drift into a penumbra," yet it was he himself who became unbalanced, wandering about Dublin in clothes of sackcloth stitched by his own unskilful hands, full of queer tricks to gather an audience for his moral exhortations, *Æ*, as George Russell names himself, becoming that influential journalist and economist Dublin knows so well. My criticism varied, sometimes calling those images a subjective intensification of such reminiscences as that which transformed his nude study, but when I had confirmed from the obscure symbolism of alchemy an explanation of the Scourging of Christ implicit in some visionary scene I had to change my tune.

III

Three or four years later our disputes began in

earnest. I insisted that these images, whether symbols projected by the subconscious, or physical facts, should be made to explain themselves; sometimes I broke off abruptly, afraid that he might never speak to me again. Sometimes I quarrelled with something said or done in the ordinary affairs of life which could not have been said or done, as I thought, had he not encountered the Magical Emblems and the Sick King and refused to ask questions that might have made the soil fruitful again.

That he should question, as Swedenborg had questioned, seemed to me of the first importance. Locke based himself upon the formula, "Nothing in mind that has not come from sense" — sense as the seventeenth century understood it — and Leibnitz commented, "Nothing except mind." But what if Henry More was right when he contended that men and animals drew not only universals but particulars from a supersensual source? May we not be compelled to change all our conceptions should it be proved that, in some crisis of life perhaps, we have access to the detailed circumstantial knowledge of other minds, or to the wisdom that has such knowledge for a foundation; or, as Henry More believed — unless I have forgotten his long essay on *The Immortality of the Soul*, toiled through some fifteen years ago — that the bees and birds learn to make nest and

comb from that *Anima Mundi* which contains the knowledge of all dead bees and birds? What if the modern accentuation of individuality is what the Buddhists call, we are told, "separateness" and in intellect as in morality an error? I think of *An Adventure* by those two Oxford ladies, heads of Colleges who found themselves of a sudden in the Court of Marie Antoinette; of Dunn's *Experiment with Time* where the visions are of the future — to name but two books from a voluminous literature from which no man has as yet deduced the consequences.

"Nothing in mind that has not come from sense except mind." If that is the foundation even of our most profound thought do not contemporary schools of opinion resemble a ghastly sight of childhood: turkeys running round the yard with their heads off?

IV

In this book Æ attempts to describe and explain some part of his experience. Swedenborg metallurgical expert, scientific speculator, was a man of boundless curiosity, but the author of *Song and its Fountains* — landscape painter and pastellist, when his visions were still a novelty — escapes with difficulty from mere pleasure and astonishment at the varied scene. I began by hating the book for its

language. My friend, whose English at the close of the civil war was so vigorous and modern — I remember an article which found its way into the prisons and stopped a hunger strike — writes as though he were living in the 'nineties, seems convinced that spiritual truth requires a dead language. He writes "dream" where other men write "dreams," a trick he and I once shared, picked up from William Sharp perhaps when the romantic movement was in its last contortions. Renaissance Platonism had ebbed out in poetic diction, isolating certain words and phrases as if they were Platonic Ideas. He has heaped up metaphors that seem to me like those wax flowers of a still older time I saw in childhood melted on the side towards the window. Yet I came to love the book for its thought.

It is almost wholly an illustration and commentary upon Plato's doctrine of pre-natal memory. It traces back Æ's dominating ideas to certain impressions, the colour of a wild flower, an image from a child's story, something somebody told him about a neighbour, a vision seen under closed eyelids; always, it seems, to single images, single events, which opened as it were sluice-gates into the will. A poet, he contends, does not transmute into song what he has learned in experience. He reverses the order and

says that the poet first imagines and that later the imagination attracts its affinities. The more we study those affinities as distinct from the first impulse the more realistic is our art, which explains why a certain novelist of my acquaintance who can describe with the most convincing detail the clothes, houses, tricks of speech of his characters, is yet the most unobservant of men. The author of *Song and its Fountains*, shows the origin of certain of his poems and believes that we can all trace back our lives as a whole from event to event to those first acts of the mind, and those acts through vision to the pre-natal life. While so engaged he came upon a moral idea which seems to me both beautiful and terrible. He had an intuition that in some pre-natal life there had been "downfall and tragic defeat"; he had begun a "concentration upon that intuition" and almost at once became terrified. He seemed to be warned away from some knowledge he could not have endured, a warning which may have preserved his sanity while confining vision to a seemingly sensuous and external panorama, and substituting an emotional apprehension for analysis. He thinks that when a man is to attain great wisdom he first learns all the evil of his past; assumes responsibility for his share in that evil, follows out with a complete knowledge the consequence of every act, repents the

sin of twenty thousand years, unified at last in thought, and only when this agony has been exhausted can he recall what was "lovely and beloved." We do not re-live the past, for our life is always our own, always novel, but dream back or think back to that first purity. Is not all spiritual knowledge perhaps a reversal, a return? Or, as he sums up in one of those quotations from his own verse which give the book its chief beauty:

"I know when I come to my own immortal I will
find there

In a myriad instant all that the soul found fair,
Empires that never crumbled and thrones all
glorious yet

And hearts ere they were broken and eyes ere they
were wet."

Plotinus had not this thought; the Cambridge Platonist, the more exhaustive ethical logic of Christianity spurring them on, might have discovered it had not the soul's re-birth, though it fascinated Glanvil, been a dangerous theme. Now, however, that McTaggart has made that doctrine the foundation of the first English systematic philosophy, one can invite attention to what may bring all past ages into the circle of conscience.

V

I turn the pages once more and find that my friend has excused his lack of questioning curiosity better than I had thought. "The Spirit," as he calls the ultimate reality, gave to some "the infinite vision," but he had been content "to know that it was there," and through that knowledge was "often happy"; had he stirred "it would have vanished"; and then he cries out in an unrhymed poem that seems to me new:

"If I would stay thee
Thou art gone inward, and thy light as lost
As the flying fish is, a pearly shadow that leaps
From the dark blue to slide in the dark blue."

He cannot follow, he adds, the stern passage of sanctity ascending from anguish to delight, nor worship Spirit under some majestic form:

"My secret was thy gentleness. I know
No nurse has ever crooned a lullaby
So softly as thou the music that guides the loud
Tempest in its going forth."

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

I

When I was a young man I wrote two essays calling Shelley's dominant symbol the Morning Star, his poetry the poetry of desire. I had meant to explain *Prometheus Unbound*, but some passing difficulty turned me from a task that began to seem impossible. What does Shelley mean by Demo-gorgon? It lives in the centre of the earth, the sphere of Parmenides perhaps, in a darkness that sends forth "rays of gloom" as "light from the meridian sun"; it names itself "eternity". When it has succeeded Jupiter, "the supreme of living things", as he did Saturn, when it and Jupiter have gone to lie "henceforth in darkness," Prometheus is set free, nature purified, Shelley the political revolutionary expected miracle, the Kingdom of God in the twinkling of an eye like some Christian of the first century. He had accepted Berkeley's philosophy as expounded in Sir William Drummond's *Academical Questions*. [The ultimate reality is not thought, for thought cannot create, but "can only perceive"; the created world is a stream of images in the human mind, the stream and cavern of his symbolism; this stream is Time. Eternity is the abyss which receives and creates.] Sometimes the soul is a boat, and in this boat Asia sails against the current from age to youth, from

youth to infancy, and so to the pre-natal condition "peopled by shapes too bright to see." In the fourth act this condition, man's first happiness and his last, sings its ecstatic song: and yet although the first and last it is always near at hand, "Tir n'an og is not far from any of you", as a country-woman said to me:

"That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there,
In truth, have never passed away;
'Tis we; 'tis ours are changed; not they."

Why then does Demo-gorgon, whose task is beneficent, who lies in wait behind "The mighty portal . . . whence the oracular vapour is hurled up which lonely men drink wandering in their youth," bear so terrible a shape, and not to the eyes of Jupiter, external necessity, alone, but to those of Asia, who is identical with the Venus-Urania of the *Athanasia*. Why is Shelley terrified of the Last Day like a Victorian child? It was not terrible to Blake, "For the cherub with the flaming sword is hereby commanded to leave his guard at the Tree of Life: and when he does the whole creation will be consumed and appear infinite and holy, whereas it now appears finite and corrupt."

II

Demo-gorgon made his plot incoherent, its interpretation impossible, it was thrust there by that something which again and again forced him to balance the object of desire conceived as miraculous and superhuman, with nightmare. Shelley told his friends of attempts upon his life or his liberty, elaborating details between delusion and deceit, believed himself infected with elephantiasis because he had sat opposite a fat woman in an omnibus, encountered terrifying apparitions, one a woman with eyes in her breasts; nor did his friendships escape obsession, his admired Elizabeth Hutchinson became "the brown demon . . . an artful, superficial, ugly, hermaphroditical beast of a woman"; nor was *Prometheus* the only nightmare-ridden work; there is nothing in *Swellfoot the Tyrant* but the cold rhetoric of obsession; *The Cenci* for all its magnificent construction is made unendurable upon the stage by an artificial character, the scapegoat of his unconscious hatred. When somebody asked Aubrey Beardsley towards the end of his life why he secreted indecencies in odd corners of his designs, more than once necessitating the destruction of a plate, he answered "Something compels me to sacrifice to Priapus." Shelley, whose art is allied to that of the Salome drawings where sex is sublimated to an unearthly

receptivity, though more ardent and positive, imagined under alike compulsion whatever seemed dark, destructive, indefinite. Blake, though he had his brown demons, kept his freedom in essentials; he had encountered with what seemed his physical eyes but one nightmare; "scaly, speckled, very awful" and thought such could visit but seldom imaginative men.

III

Shelley was not a mystic, his system of thought was constructed by his logical faculty to satisfy desire, not a symbolical revelation received after the suspension of all desire. He could neither say with Dante "Thy will is my peace", nor with Finn in the Irish story "the best music is what happens."

There is a form of meditation which permits an image or symbol to generate itself, and the images and symbols so generated build themselves up into coherent structures often beautiful and startling. When a young man I made an exhaustive study of this condition in myself and in others, choosing as a rule for the initiatory symbol a name or form associated with the Cabbalistic Sephiroth, or with one of the five traditional elements. Sometimes, though not in my own case, trance intervened and the structure

attained a seeming physical solidity, this however seldom happened and was considered undesirable. Almost always, after some days or weeks of meditation, a form emerged in sleep or amid the ordinary affairs of life to show or speak some significant message, or at some moment a strange hidden will controlled the unconscious movements of the body. If the experimentalist had an impassioned purpose, some propaganda, let us say, and no critical sense, he might become obsessed by images, voices, that had, it seemed, for their soul object to guard his purpose or to express its contrary and to threaten. The mystic on the other hand is in no such danger, he so lives whether in east or west, whether he be Ramakrishna or Boehme, as to dedicate his initiatory image, and its generated images, not to his own but to the Divine purpose, and after certain years attains the Saint's miraculous life. There have been others unfitted for such a life by nature or station, who could yet dedicate their actions and acquire what William Morris has called lucky eyes; "all that he does unwitting he does well." There is much curious evidence to show that the Divine Purpose so invoked descends into the mind at moments of inspiration, not as spiritual life alone but as what seems a physical brightness. Perhaps everybody that pursues that life for however short a time, even, as it were, but to chase it,

experiences now and again during sleep bright coherent dreams where something is shown or spoken that grows in meaning with the passage of time. Blake spoke of this "stronger and better light," called its source "the human form divine", Shelley's "harmonious soul of many a soul," or, as we might say, the Divine Purpose. The stationary, joyous energy of certain among his figures, "Christ Blessing" for instance, or of his own life when we regard it as a whole as contrasted with the sadness and disquiet of Shelley's, suggests radiating light. We understand why the first Christian painters encircled certain heads with light. Because this source or purpose is always an action, never a system of thought, its man can attend, as Shelley would not, to the whole drama of life, simplicities, banalities, intoxications, even lie upon his left side and eat dung, set free "from a multitude of opinions."

It was as a mystic that Blake wrote "Sweet joy befall thee," "Soft deceit and idleness," "The Holy Word walks among the ancient trees." Shelley's art shows that he was an unconverted man though certainly a visionary, what people call "psychic"; his landscapes are vaporised and generalised by his purpose, his spirits have not the separated existence even of those that in *Manfred* curse and yet have "sweet and melancholy" voices. He was the tyrant of his

own being, nor was it in all likelihood a part of the plan that it should find freedom, seeing that he worked as did Keats and Marlowe, uncorrecting and unhesitating, as though he knew the shortness of his life. That life, and all lives would be unintelligible to me did I not think of them as an exfoliation prolonged from life to life; he sang of something beginning.

IV

When I was in my early twenties Shelley was much talked about, London had its important "Shelley Society", *The Cenci* had been performed and forbidden, provincial sketching clubs displayed pictures by young women of the burning of Shelley's body. The orthodox religion, as our mothers had taught it, was no longer credible, those who could not substitute connoisseurship, or some humanitarian or scientific pursuit, found a substitute in Shelley. He had shared our curiosities, our political problems, our conviction that despite all experience to the contrary love is enough; and unlike Blake, isolated by an arbitrary symbolism, he seemed to sum up all that was metaphysical in English poetry. When in middle life I looked back I found that he and not Blake, whom I had studied more and with more approval, had shaped my life, and when I thought of the tumultuous and

often tragic lives of friends or acquaintances I attributed to his direct or indirect influence their Jacobin frenzies, their brown demons.

V

Another study of that time, less general, more confined to exceptional men, was that of Balzac as a social philosopher. When I was thirteen or fourteen I heard somebody say that he changed men's lives, nor can I think it a coincidence that an epoch founded in such thought as Shelley's ended with an art of solidity and complexity. Me at any rate he saved from the pursuit of a beauty that seeming at once absolute and external requires, to strike a balance, hatred as absolute. Yet Balzac is no complete solution for that can be found in religion alone. One of the sensations of my childhood was a description of a now lost design of Nettleship's, "God creating Evil", a vast terrifying face, a woman and a tiger rising from the forehead. Why did it seem so blasphemous and so profound? It was many years before I understood that we must not demand even the welfare of the human race, nor traffic with divinity in our prayers. Divinity moves outside our antinomies, it may be our lot to worship in terror; "Did He who made the lamb make thee?"

LOUIS LAMBERT.

I

Sometimes I meet somebody who read *Louis Lambert* in his 'teens and find that he and I have put it among our sacred books, those books that expound destiny with such a mysterious authority that they furnish texts for pious meditation. Yet *Louis Lambert* is more or less materialistic; all things originate in a substance which is the common element of electricity, heat and light. In the brain the animal transforms it, in proportion to the strength of the brain, into will. This will creates out of itself thought and sense and by their means absorbs more and more of the parent substance. Though we speak of five senses there is only one, light, for tasting, hearing, smelling are light or sight transformed by different mutations of the substance. Balzac, who describes his own schooldays when he describes Louis Lambert's, may have found in that library at the Vendôme College, founded by learned Oratorians, the works of Bonaventura and of his contemporary Grosseteste, for to Bonaventura hearing, tasting, smelling are forms of light, while to Grosseteste light confers form upon the First Matter. Light is corporeality, he declares, or that of which corporeality is made, a point from which spherical space or corporeality flows as from nothing; a miracle repeated whenever our candle is

lit. *Louis Lambert* gives, as it seems, this ancient doctrine, Greek in origin, a materialistic turn by substituting for that first formless matter something that is less the ether of science which began to take its place at the close of the seventeenth century than the common element without attributes described by Crookes: that material Absolute sought by Balthasar Claes in crucible and retort. Berkeley, Balzac's opposite physically and mentally, substituted God, and in *Siris*, like Grosseteste, made light or visibility (our principal perception or sensation) the common form of all particular objects.

II

There is no evidence that Balzac knew that things exist in being perceived, or, to adopt the formula of a later idealism, that they exist in being thought, his powerful body, his imagination which saw everywhere weight and magnitude, the science of his day, made him, like Descartes, consider matter as independent of mind. What then drove him half-way back to the mediæval hypothesis? At some time of life, probably while still at college, before or during the composition of that *Treatise Upon the Will*, which he attributes to Louis Lambert, he must have had, or met in others, supernormal experiences resembling

those that occur again and again in the *Comédie Humaine*. Passages in *Seraphita* suggest familiarity with a state known to me in youth, a state transcending sleep when forms, often of great beauty, appear minutely articulated in brilliant light, forms that express by word or action some spiritual idea and are so moulded or tinted that they make all human flesh seem unhealthy. Then he must have known of, or had some vision of objects distant in time or place, perhaps in the remote past like that vision seen by Lucian de Rubempré before his death. Something more profound, more rooted in the blood than mere speculation, drove him to Swedenborg, perhaps to Bonaventura and Grosseteste; constrained him to think of the human mind as capable, during some emotional crisis, or, as in the case of Louis Lambert by an accident of genius, of containing within itself all that is significant in human history and of relating that history to timeless reality. He was able to do this by considering light, or fire, not as the child but as the parent or grandparent of the physical senses * by reviving the old doctrine of the animal spirits. "In the *Timæus* of Plato," writes Berkeley, "there is something like a net of fire, and rays of fire in the human

* I think it probable that Eliphas Levi found his "Astral Light" not, as he said, in Saint Martin, where the one deep student of that eighteenth-century mystic known to me has searched for it in vain, but in "Louis Lambert."

body. Doth this not seem to mean the animal spirit flowing, or rather darting, through the nerves?" This fire is certainly that energy which in *Seraphita* is distinguished from will, and it is doubtless through its agency that will can rise above the human lot, or act beyond the range of the normal senses. "If we believe Diogenes Laertius," writes Berkeley, "the Pythagorean philosophers thought there was a certain pure heat or fire which had something divine in it, by the participation whereof man becomes allied to the Gods. And according to the Platonists, Heaven is not defined so much by its local situation as by its purity. The purest and most excellent fire, that is Heaven, saith Facinus."

III

Louis Lambert's withdrawal into a state of dumb helpless wisdom on the day before what should have been his happy marriage, or into that madness which was an escape from the conflict between his desire of eternity and his sexual desire, suggests certain experiments of Balzac's day. As the mesmeric trance deepened the subject attained, not merely that vision of distant scenes described in *Ursule Mirouet*, but wisdom. Perhaps, too, a Desplein or a Biancon

had pointed out that at times during such experiments the body became icy-cold as though its heat had come not from itself but from the now absent soul; an ancient doctrine Mr. Carrington has supported by a curious book. The body, he contends, does not draw its heat from the combustion of food but during sleep from an unknown source. Balzac, could he have known our modern psychical research, would have noticed that the medium passing into trance is cold, that the thermometer may register a chill in the air, that now and again some "spirit" describes those brilliant lights that flit so silently about the room as the source of the energy used in the levitation of objects or in the production of voices, nor would he have failed to interest himself in Ochrowicz's suggestion that certain luminous egg-shaped objects, appearing and disappearing suddenly in the darkness, were the irreducible physical minimum of personality.

IV

Louis Lambert, having attributed to man two natures, one that of an angel, hesitates; perhaps, he says, man has not two natures, perhaps, though merely men, we are capable of incomprehensible acts which we, in our admiration for the incomprehensible, attribute to spiritual beings. Here are the two doctrines

which dominate our psychical research — spiritualism and animism — the first in Anglo-Saxon countries where the Fox Sisters had so great an effect, the second upon the continent where the Mesmerists, perhaps more through Balzac, George Sand, Dumas than by direct influence, have accustomed students to think that a personal illumination or state of power can be aroused by experimental means. When Balzac speaks through Seraphita or describes the Duchesse de Longuet playing upon the organ, he thinks of the choir of Heaven, when he creates a Desplein or a Biancon he is, as I think, both animist and materialist.

Will, having drawn to itself, one of Louis Lambert's aphorisms explains, a sufficient quantity of the substance (light or matter), becomes a most powerful mechanism, for it is like some great stream drawing to itself lesser streams, it may even acquire the qualities of the substance, "the swiftness of light, the penetrating power of electricity," or it becomes aware of an "X", an unknown something which consumes and burns, the Word which is forever generating the substance. Here, though, but for a moment, Balzac's thought and that of Berkeley coincide. The Word is that which turns number into movement, but number (division, magnitude, enumeration) is described by Seraphita as unreal and as involving in unreality all our science. Two and two cannot be four,

for nature has no two things alike. Every part is a separate thing and therefore itself a whole and so on. Is movement reality or does it share the unreality of number, its source? Balzac but touches and passes on absorbed in drama. One could fill the gaps in his thought, substitute definition for his vague suggestion were not that to lose the bull-necked man, the great eater, whose work resembles his body, the mechanist and materialist who wrote upon the darkness with a burnt stick such sacred and exciting symbols.

A modern painter, who thinks, like Whistler, that a picture must be perfect from the first sketch, growing in richness of detail but not in unity, knows that a work of art must remain fluid to the finish, that an alteration in some minor character or in some detail of colour compels alteration elsewhere. He knows, too, having learnt in disappointment and fatigue, that if his first sketch lacks unity he will not know how to finish. But what is true of the work of art is true of the painter's or dramatist own life, and if the work is not to be a closed circuit that first sketch has been shaped by desires and alarms arising from another sketch, made not for art but for life. The specialist may add fact to fact, postponing synthesis till greater knowledge, but the man cannot, for, lacking it, he can neither understand nor see correctly. Jane

Austen, Scott, Fielding, inherited that other sketch in its clearest and simplest form, but Balzac had to find it in his own mind. His sketch is *Louis Lambert*, the demonstration of its truth is that it made possible the *Comédie Humaine*.

In the *Comédie Humaine* society is seen as a struggle for survival, each character an expression of will, the struggle Darwin was to describe a few years later, without what our instinct repudiates, Darwin's exaltation of accidental variations. Privilege, pride, the rights of property, are seen preserving the family against individual man armed with Liberty, Equality, Fraternity; and because the French Revolution was recent, he seems to prefer that wing of the Historical Antinomy that best fosters fine manners, minds set too high for intrigue and fear. He could be just to Catherine de Medici who preserved the State, personification of the family, to Napoleon who created the State; but, dreading, as I think, that hatred might infect his thought, brought into the action no great figure of the Revolution; personifying in the distant figure of Calvin, what he called the war of ideas with the State. Will, or passion which is but blind will, is always at crisis, or approaching crisis; everything else seems eliminated, or is made fantastic or violent that the will, without seeming to do so, may exceed nature. Charles Grandet when the story is near its

climax slips away to the Indies, earns a large fortune, is back again before we have turned the page; Balzac, who invents detail with so much ease, knows that here it would slacken the pulse. Then, too, always somewhere in the background must lurk Vautrin, Seraphita, the Thirteen. He creates the impossible that all may seem possible. He is like those painters who set patches of pure colour side by side, knowing that they will combine in the eye into the glitter of a wave, into the sober brown of a grass seed. And this world of his, where everything happens in a blaze of light, and not the France of the historians, is early nineteenth-century France to thousands all over Europe.

V

Twenty years ago I read Tolstoi, Dostoieffsky, Flaubert with delight, but never opened them again. I belong to a generation that returns to Balzac alone. The Russians make us debate some point of view peculiar to the author, Flaubert etherializes all with his conviction that life is no better than a smell of cooking through a grating. But Balzac leaves us when the book is closed amid the crowd that fills the boxes and the galleries of grand opera; even after hearing Seraphita amid her snows, we return to that crowd which is always right because there is so much history

in its veins, to those kings, generals, diplomats, beautiful ladies, to that young Biancon, to that young Desplein, to all those shabby students of the arts sitting in the Galleries. Tolstoi, Dostoieffsky, Flaubert draw to their support scholars and sectaries, their readers stand above the theme or beside it, they judge and they reject; but there in the crowded theatre are Balzac's readers and his theme, seen with his eyes they have become philosophy without ceasing to be history. They do not make this impression upon us because of their multitude, there is almost a comparable multitude in *War and Peace*, but because that first sketch that gives unity is an adaption to his need and time of all that moulded Europe. Stendhal created a modern art; the seminary in *Rouge et Noir*, unlike that described by Balzac in *Louis Lambert*, is of his own time and is judged according to its standards, is wholly reflected in the dawdling mirror that was to empty modern literature; but something compelled Balzac while still at school to travel backward, as did the mind of Louis Lambert, to accept all that lay hidden in his blood and in his nerves. Here and there in Blake, in Keats, in Blunt, in Browning, for I cannot judge the rhythm of words in any language but my own, there is a deep masculine resonance, that comes, I think, from a perfect accord between intellect and blood, lacking elsewhere since the

death of Cowley. These men, whose rhythm seems to combine the bull and the nightingale were not modern, one had rejected us, two had ignored us, one had surpassed us. I find what seems their match in those passages in the *Comédie Humaine* that suddenly startle us with a wisdom deeper than intellect and seem to demand an audience of the daring and the powerful. I have lived from boyhood in the shadow, as it were, of that enumeration of famous women in *La Recherche de l' Absolu* ending with the sentence, "Blessed are the imperfect for theirs is the Kingdom of Love." Dante might have made it or some great mediæval monk, preaching in Rheims, where the French kings lie buried.

VI

When I lectured in America the other day, I always invited questions and was constantly asked about books I had never heard of, books everybody was reading. Once I said, "Lionel Johnson held that a man should have read through all good books before he was forty and after that be satisfied with six." Then somebody asked what would be my six books and I said I wanted six authors not six books and I named four authors, choosing not from those that should, but from those that did most move me, and said I had forgotten the names of the other two. "First comes Shakespeare," I said. "Then the Arabian Nights in

its latest English version, then William Morris, who gives me all the great stories Homer and the Sagas included, then Balzac who saved me from Jacobin and Jacobite."

INTRODUCTION TO "AN INDIAN MONK."

I

I wrote an introduction to the beautiful *Gitanjali* of Tagore, and now, twenty years afterwards, draw attention to a book that may prove of comparable importance. A little more than a year ago I met its author, but lately arrived in Europe, at Mr. Sturge Moore's house. He had been sent by his Master, or spiritual director, that he might interpret the religious life of India, but had no fixed plan. Perhaps he should publish his poems, perhaps, like Vivekānanda, go to America. He had gone to Rome thinking it was but courteous to pay his respects to the Holy Father, but though the Abbots of the most orthodox Hindu Shrines had given him their blessing, and "the organiser of the Bhārat-Dharma Mahāmandal. . . a general letter of introduction", he was not received. Then he had come to England and called upon the Poet Laureate, who entertained him. He is a man of fifty, broken in health by the austerities of his religious life; he must have been a stalwart man and he is still handsome. He makes one

think of some Catholic theologian who has lived in the best society, confessed people out of Henry James' novels, had some position at Court where he could engage the most absorbed attention without raising his voice, but that is only at first sight. He is something much simpler, more childlike and ancient. During lunch he and I, Sturge Moore, and an attaché from the Egyptian Legation, exceedingly well read in European literature, discussed his plans and ideas. The attaché, born into a Jewish family that had lived among Mahommedans for generations, seemed more Christian in his point of view than Moore or myself. Presently the attaché said: "Well, I suppose what matters is to do all the good one can". "By no means," said the monk. "If you have that object you may help some few people, but you will have a bankrupt soul. I must do what my Master bids, the responsibility is His." That sentence, spoken without any desire to startle, interested me the more because I had heard the like from other Indians. Once when I stayed at Wilfred Blunt's I talked to an exceedingly religious Mahommedan, kept there that he might not run himself into political trouble in India. He spoke of the coming independence of India, but declared that India would never organise. "There are only three eternal nations," he said, "India, Persia, China; Greece organised and Greece is dead." I remembered too that an

able Indian doctor I met when questioning London Indians about Tagore said of a certain Indian leader. "We do not think him sincere; he taught virtues merely because he thought them necessary to India". This care for the spontaneity of the soul seems to me Asia at its finest and where it is most different from Europe, the explanation perhaps why it has confronted our moral earnestness and our control of Nature with its asceticism and its courtesy.

We sat on for a couple of hours after lunch while the monk, in answer to my questions, told of his childhood, his life at the University, of spiritual forms that he had seen, of seven years meditation in his house, of nine years wandering with his begging-bowl. Presently I said: "The ideas of India have been expounded again and again, nor do we lack ideas of our own; discussion has been exhausted, but we lack experience. Write what you have just told us; keep out all philosophy, unless it interprets something seen or done."

I found afterwards that I had startled and shocked him, for an Indian monk who speaks of himself contradicts all tradition, but that after much examination of his conscience he came to the conclusion that those traditions were no longer binding, and that besides, as he explained to Sturge Moore, a monk, a certain stage of initiation reached, is bound by nothing but the will of his Master. He took my advice

and brought his book, chapter by chapter, to Sturge Moore for correction. Sturge Moore one of our finest critics, would say: "You have told us too much of this, or too little of that; you must make us see that temple more clearly", or he would cross something out, or alter a word, helping him to master our European sense of form.

II

The book lies before me complete; it seems to me something I have waited for since I was seventeen years old. About that age, bored by an Irish Protestant point of view that suggested by its blank abstraction chlorate of lime, I began to question the country-people about apparitions. Some dozen years later Lady Gregory collected with my help the stories in her *Visions and Beliefs*. Again and again, she and I felt that we had got down, as it were, into some fibrous darkness, into some matrix out of which everything has come, some condition that brought together as though into a single scheme "exultations, agonies," and the apparitions seen by dogs and horses; but there was always something lacking. We came upon visionaries of whom it was impossible to say whether they were Christian or Pagan, found memories of jugglers like those of India, found fragments of a belief that associated Eternity with field

and road, not with buildings; but these visionaries, memories, fragments, were eccentric, alien, shut off as it were under the plate glass of a museum; I had found something of what I wanted but not all, the explanatory intellect had disappeared. When Shri Purohit Swami described his journey up those seven thousand steps at Mount Girnār, that creaking bed, that sound of pattens in the little old half-forgotten temple, and fitted everything into an ancient discipline, a philosophy that satisfied the intellect, I found all I wanted.

III

Byzantine mystical theologians, Simeon, Callistus, Ignatius, and many others, taught a form of prayer or mental discipline resembling his. The devotee must say continually, even though his thought be elsewhere, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us"; a modern Russian pilgrim ¹ of their school repeated those words daily twelve thousand times, "Lord Jesus Christ" as he drew in his breath, "have mercy upon us" as he breathed it out, until they had

¹ The Rev. R. M. French has translated his autobiography into English and calls it "The Way of a Pilgrim". "Of the pilgrim's identity nothing is known", he writes; "in some way his manuscript, or a copy of it, came into the hands of a monk on Mount Athos, in whose possession it was found by the Abbot of St. Michael's Monastery at Kasan."

grown automatic and were repeated in his sleep; he became, as he said, not speaker but listener ¹ Shri Purohit Swami writes: "I repeated the Gāyitri, the most sacred mantram, was so habituated that even in my dreams I continued. When talking with others my mind went on unconsciously muttering "We meditate on the supreme splendour of that Divine Being, may it illuminate our intellects". The Russian pilgrim begged dry bread from door to door; a monk of Mount Athos is at this moment travelling through the world and living upon "fifty acorns a day". My Indian monk's habitual diet is milk and fruit, but his austerity at times has been greater; he writes of a certain pilgrimage: "I refused to take either milk or fruit by the way and only drank water from time to time; my friend sang the glory of the Master" (their divine Lord Dattātreya) "whenever I sat for rest under the shade of a tree, and would try to find and bring water to me".

IV

The prayers, however, are unlike, for the Russian's prayer implies original sin, that of the Indian asks for

¹ Swami comments, "Some of the yogis of India practise Ajapa-japa Mantram. Ajapa-japa is very short and easy. They repeat "Soham" as they draw in the breath and "Hamsah" as they breathe it out. Soham Hamsah means, "I am that Hamsa, — the eternal self or soul".

an inspired intellect; and this unlikeness is fundamental, the source perhaps of all other differences. The Russian, like most European mystics, distrusts visions though he admits their reality, seems indifferent to Nature, may perhaps dread it like Saint Bernard, who passed the Italian Lakes with averted eyes. The Indian, upon the other hand, approaches God through a vision, speaks continually of the beauty and terror of the great mountains, interrupts his prayer to listen to the song of birds, remembers with delight the nightingale that disturbed his meditation by alighting upon his head and singing there, recalls after many years the whiteness of a sheet, the softness of a pillow, the gold embroidery upon a shoe. These things are indeed part of the "splendour of that Being". The first four Christian centuries shared his thought; Byzantine theologians that named their great church "The Holy Wisdom" sang it; so, too, did those Irish monks who made innumerable poems about bird and beast, and spread the doctrine that Christ was the most beautiful of men. Some Irish saint, whose name I have forgotten, sang "There is one among the beasts that is perfect, one among the fish, one perfect among men".

V

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one,

I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written", but Christendom has based itself upon four short books and for long insisted that all must interpret them in the same way. It was at times dangerous for a painter to vary, however slightly, the position of the nails upon the Cross. The greatest saints have had their books examined by the Holy Office, for East and West seem each other's contraries — the East so independent spiritually, so ready to submit to the conqueror; the West independent politically, so ready to submit to its Church. The West impregnated an East full of spiritual turbulence, and that turbulence brought forth a child Western in complexion and in feature. Since the Renaissance, literature, science and the fine arts have left the Church and sought elsewhere the variety necessary to their existence; perhaps the converse impregnation has begun, the East as male. Being most impressed by arts that I have myself practised, I remember our selection for admiration of old masterpieces where "tonal values" or the sense of weight and bulk that is the particular discovery of Europe are the least apparent: some flower of Botticelli's, perhaps, that seems a separate intellectual existence. Then I think of the sensuous deliberation Spenser brought into English literature, of the magic of *Christabel*, or *Kubla Khan*, of the wise pedlar

in the *Excursion*, of *Ahasuerus* in Hellas and wisdom, magic, sensation, seem Asiatic. We have borrowed directly from the East and selected for admiration or repetition everything in our own past that is least European, as though groping backward towards our common mother.

VI

Perhaps dogmatism was the necessary check upon European violence, asceticism upon the Asiatic fecundity. When Christ said: "I and my Father are One", it is possible to interpret Him as Shri Purohit Swami interprets his Master's "I am Brahma". The One is present in all numbers, Brahma in all men though self-conscious in the ascetic alone; and the plain man admits the evidence, for, beat the pupil and the ascetic's back is scored, and the ascetic, if he please, can exhaust in his own body an epidemic that might have swept away the village. Nor can a single image, that of Christ, Krishna or Buddha, represent God to the exclusion of other images. Shri Purohit Swami worshipped God at first as represented in a certain religious picture with an exciting history and no artistic merit, come to him through some accident of his personal history, but before the ascent of Mount Girnār his Master, though he has forgotten

to record the incident in this book, transferred to him by a glance "the vision of the formless"; after that he could still worship God under any image, but an image chosen by himself. That initiation with its final freedom is itself an epitome of the soul's gradual escape, in its passage through many incarnations, from all that is external and predestined.

The Swami is a minstrel and story-teller where all popular literature is religion; yet all his poems are love-songs, lullabies or songs of loyalty to friend or master, for in his belief and in that of his hearers he can but offer to God the service learnt in service of man or woman; nor can any single service symbolise man's relation to God. He must be sung as the soul's husband, bride, child and friend. I asked for translations of these songs, which he sings in a sweet, not very strong voice, to a music which seems to employ intervals smaller than those of European music, especially for translations of those in Marāthi, his native tongue, for what poet is at his best out of his native tongue? He has, however, sent me translations of his poems in Urdu and Hindi as well, for his pilgrimage as it encircles India expends but two months in his native State, and everywhere he must sing. The English hymn-writer, writing not as himself but as the congregation, is a rhetorician; but the Indian convention, founded upon the most poignant

personal emotion, should make poets. The Swami has beautiful dramatic ideas, but only somebody born into one of those three tongues can say whether he has added that irrational element which has made *Sing a Song of Sixpence* immortal. This is from Mar-
athi:

Sweet are His eyes, sweet His looks,
The love they look exceeding sweet,
Sweet are His lips, sweet His kiss,
The love displayed exceeding sweet.
Sweet His words, His promise sweet,
Presence and absence both are sweet,
The pangs of love exceeding sweet.

This is from Hindi:

I know that I am a great sinner,
That there is no remedy,
But let Thy will be done.
If my Lord wishes he need not speak to me.
All I ask is that of His bounty
He walk by my side through my life.
I will behave well.
Though He never embrace me—
O Lord, Thou art my Master
And I Thy slave.¹⁷

This is from Urdu:

Shall I do this?
Shall I do that?
My hands are empty,
All that talk amounts to nothing.
Never, never will I do anything;
Having been commanded to woo Thee
I should keep myself wide awake
Or else sleep away my life.
I am unfit to do the first,
But I can sleep with open eyes,
And I can always pretend to laugh,
And I can weep for the state I am in;
But my laugh has gone for good,
And gone the charm of tears.

And this too is from Urdu:

A miracle indeed!
Thou art Lord of all Power.
I asked a little power,
Thou gavest me a begging-bowl.

VII

Our moral indignation, our uniform law; perhaps
even our public spirit, may come from the Christian

conviction that the soul has but one life to find or lose salvation in: the Asiatic courtesy from the conviction that there are many lives. There are Indian courtesans that meditate many hours a day awaiting without sense of sin their moment, perhaps many lives hence, to leave man for God. For the present they are efficient courtesans. Ascetics, as this book tells, have lived in their houses and received pilgrims there. Kings, princes, beggars, soldiers, courtesans and the fool by the wayside are equal to the eye of sanctity, for everybody's road is different, everybody awaits his moment.

VIII

The reader of the lives of European devotees may at first be disappointed in this book; the author's life is modelled upon no sacred example, ordered by no well-trying conventual discipline. He is pleased to remember that he learnt his book quickly at the college, that he overcame the wrestler, that he showed courage before the assassin's knife; and yet, though he display our foibles and vanities, he has what we have not, though we once had it—heroic ecstatic passion prolonged through years, through many vicissitudes. Certain Indian, Chinese and Japanese representations of the Buddha, and of other Divine beings, have a little round lump on the centre of the

forehead; ecstasies have sometimes received, as it were from the seal of the God, a similar mark. It corresponds to the wounds made as though by nails upon the hands and feet of some Christian saint, but the symbolism differs. The wounds signify God's sacrifice for man — "Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us" — that round mark the third eye, no physical organ but the mind's direct apprehension of the truth, above all antinomies, as the mark itself is above eyes, ears, nostrils, in their duality — "splendour of that Divine Being". During our first meetings, whether within doors or without, Shri Purohit Swami's orange turban hid his forehead to the eyes, but he took it off one hot day during lunch, and I saw the little round lump. Marks somewhat resembling those made by nails have been produced upon the hands and feet of patients in a French hospital by hypnotic suggestion, and it is usual, although the wounds of the saints seen by credible witnesses were deeper, more painful, more disfiguring, to attribute those wounds to auto-suggestion. My own studies, which have not been brief or superficial, compel me to admit suggestion, but to deny with a fervour like that of some humble ignorant Catholic that it can come out of the mind of the ecstatic. Some day I shall ask Shri Purohit Swami if the mark first appeared upon his forehead when he lay unconscious upon the top of Mount Girnār.

INTRODUCTION TO "THE HOLY MOUNTAIN."

I

"I know nothing but the novels of Balzac, and the aphorisms of Patanjali. I once knew other things, but I am an old man with a poor memory." There must be some reason why I wanted to write that lying sentence, for it has been in my head for weeks. Is it that whenever I have been tempted to go to Japan, China or India for my philosophy, Balzac has brought me back, reminded me of my preoccupation with national, social, personal problems, convinced me that I cannot escape from our *Comédie Humaine*? We philosophize that we may reduce our minds to a single energy, and thereby save our souls and feed our bodies. We prove what we must and assume the rest upon hearsay. No two civilisations prove or assume the same things, but behind both hides the unchanging experience of simple men and women. When I read the travels of Purohit Swāmi, or of his Master, Bhagwām Shri Hamsa, I am among familiar things. *Seraphita* has prepared me for those adventures, those apparitions, and I remember that the knights and hermits who prepared the ground for our *Comédie Humaine* preferred, it may be, such adventures to philosophy, such apparitions to dogma:

*'One wise friend and one
Better than wise being fair.'*

II

Shri Purohit Swāmi at the beginning of this century was a Mr. Purohit, student of the University of Bombay. He had inherited from his Marāthā fathers the worship of Dattātreya, the first Yogi, spiritual Father of all Yogis since, or, as we would say, their patron saint. He had seen him in his dreams, but such knowledge is insufficient; dream words are few and hard to understand; he needed for guide some man who could point out from personal experience what meditations enrich the waking mind. For a time he ceased to read. When he fixed his attention upon the Lord Dattātreya even the Bhagavad-Geetā distracted him.

The students had come to associate scholarship with a weak body and shabby clothes, and there was a reaction towards athletics; he had prided himself on being scholar, athlete, dandy, but because women, notorious disturbers of meditation, attracted him, and were attracted, he ate little, grew a beard and dressed out of the fashion. Finding that among holy people his mind grew quiet, he frequented temples and places of pilgrimage; because contact with a

supernatural being is never attained through the waking mind, but through the act of what is called the “unconscious mind”, he repeated thousands of times every day: “We meditate upon the splendour of that Being. May it illuminate our intellects”, until he spoke those words in his sleep, or silently while engaged in conversation. At a temple in Narsobā Wādi he met a beautiful courtesan who had come seeking a cure for some ailment, found the cure, but whenever she attempted to return to her lover, fell sick at the border of the territory, and now sat there, and would while life lasted, dressed in a white robe, praising her Divine Master to the notes of her lute. She had prayed, not foreseeing its consequence, not only for physical, but for spiritual health, and the “unconscious mind” had heard her prayer.

III

But because he could not persuade those Masters he found acceptable to accept him, he sank into despair. He sat weeping in his room; a friend knocked at the door, asked him to meet a certain Shri Nātēkār Swāmi, now known as Bhagwān Shri Hamsa, who had just arrived. “We ascended the stairs of Keerti-kar building”, he writes, “and were admitted into a small room at the top floor. As I entered, the Swāmi,

who was sitting upon a tiger's skin, rose. Our eyes met." And Shri Nātēkār Swāmi, though so far as Mr. Purohit knew they had never seen each other, said: "We meet again after a long time". He was the elder by four years. He came of a wealthy family, and his father, dreading that his son would become a wandering monk, as had uncles and ancestors, had made him marry at the age of sixteen; but one day while he sat reading upon a river bank, his soul awoke, and throwing book and European clothes into the river, he began a life of austerity. The country people account for his sanctity with a story as incredible to modern ears as any told of the childhood of some European saint, but symbolising an alliance between body and soul our theology rejects. A certain beautiful married woman at the age of twenty had, with her husband's consent, become a pilgrim. After wandering from Himālayān shrine to shrine for many years, she had found a home in a ruined temple at Brahmāvarta. Some called her the mad woman, and some, because of the cotton mat that covered her loins, "the Lady of the Mat". She had but two possessions, that cotton mat and her lute. Shri Nātēkār Swāmi's father went on pilgrimage to Brahmāvarta with his son, then but a child. Father and son visited the Lady of the Mat. The child climbed on to her knees. She said: "Leave him with me; I will take

care of him". The father did not dare to disobey, but was alarmed because she had no food but a daily piece of bread brought her by a water-carrier. When he returned next day with food, the child would not touch it, because the Saint had fed him from her breast. She fed him for a fortnight, then gave him back to his father, saying: "He will know when a grown man what I have done for him." One day the Saint called the water-carrier, told him that she was about to leave the world. Because he wept, she gave him her mat as a relic, told him that he must bring her lute to the boy she had fed. Then as she played and sang, the waters of the Ganges became disturbed first little waves, then great waves; the more she sang, the greater grew the waves. When they touched her feet, she handed the lute to the water-carrier. A moment later they had swept her away; then, upon the the instant, all was still.

Mr. Purohit took up once more the life of a student. When he had passed, to please his father, his final law examination, he was summoned by Dattātreyā in a dream. He and his master set out for Mount Gīrnār, where the footprints of Dattātreyā are shown upon a rock. He repeated all day: "We meditate upon the splendour of that Being". At the foot of the Mountain, he vowed to throw himself from the cliff if his Divine Master remained hidden. As they climbed

the seven thousand steps, he neither ate nor drank, though he had starved himself for weeks, and he had constantly to lie down to rest. At the full moon of 25th. December 1907, the birthday of Dattatreya, they reached the summit. He fell asleep upon the sacred footsteps as the sun set, and did not awake till the moon was in the sky. As he awoke he knew that Dattatreya had in his sleep accepted him, and when he felt his forehead, he found in the centre the first trace of that small mound that is the Indian equivalent to the Christian Stigmata. He had attained *Sushupti* or unconscious *Samdāhi*, a dreamless sleep that differs from that of every sleeper in some part of the night, every insect in the chrysalis, every hibernating animal, every soul between death and birth, because attained through the sacrifice of the physical senses, and through meditation upon a divine personality, a personality at once historical and yet his own spiritual Self. Henceforth that personality, that Self, would be able, though always without his knowledge, to employ his senses and, as in the East the bodily movements are classified as senses, to direct his life. He was not isolated, however, as are men of genius or intellect, for henceforth all those in whom that Self had awakened were his neighbours.

Already while his attainment was incomplete, when he had not even reached the top of the steps, he had

seen a beautiful slender woman, with dark bright eyes and red lips, leaning against a tree, and as she vanished, received her benediction, and now as he descended, another of the Masters of Wisdom, a bright-eyed man, appeared.

Although accepted, although henceforth not Mr. Purohit but Shri Purohit Swāmi, he refused to accompany his friend who had in a meditation known as *Savikalpa-Samādhi* been ordered to seek *Turiyā*, the greater or conscious *Samādhi*, at Mount Kailās, the legendary Meru; he thought himself unworthy, that he had not freed himself from the World, and could but carry it upon the journey.

IV

Sometimes they came in contact with that Europeanised India England has created with a higher education, which is always conducted in the English language. Shri Purohit Swāmi saw to his master's comforts, left him stretched out for sleep in a first-class carriage, went to find a third-class carriage for himself, but there was not even standing room. He decided to return to his Master, but found an empty carriage. His Master had left the train and was sitting upon a bench, naked but for a loin cloth. A

Europeanised Indian had denounced him for wearing silk and travelling first class, and all monks and pilgrims for bringing discredit upon India by their superstitions and idleness. So he stripped off his silk clothes, saying that though they seemed to have come with his destiny, they were of no importance. Then, because the stranger was still unsatisfied, had given him his luggage and his ticket. They were able, however, to continue their journey, for just when the train was about to start, the Europeanised Indian returned and threw clothes, luggage and ticket into the carriage. He had been attacked by remorse. When they reached their destination, Shri Nātēkār Swāmi sat down in the prescribed attitude, passed into *Samādhi*, and Shri Purohit Swāmi, openly rejoicing, sang his praises — Divine and Human Master, one in that dark or bright meditation:

*‘Lead me to that Kingdom of Thine
Where there is no pleasure of union
Nor displeasure of separation,
Where the self is in eternal happiness.
Thou alone can thither lead the ailing soul’*

— verse after verse, until his Master came out of meditation with a cry: “Victory, victory to the Lord Dattātreyā”.

Much Chinese and Japanese painting is a celebration of mountains, and so sacred were those mountains that Japanese artists, down to the invention of the colour print, constantly recomposed the characters of Chinese mountain scenery, as though they were the letters of an alphabet, into great masterpieces, traditional and spontaneous. I think of the face of the Virgin in Siennese painting, preserving, after the supporting saints had lost it, a Byzantine character.

To Indians, Chinese and Mongols, mountains from the earliest times have been the dwelling places of the Gods. Their kings before any great decision have climbed some mountain, and of all these mountains Kailās, or Mount Meru, as it is called in the *Mahabharata*, was the most famous. Sven Hedin calls it the most famous of all mountains, pointing out that Mount Blanc is unknown to the crowded nations of the East. Thousands of Hindu, Tibetan and Chinese pilgrims, Vedāntin, or Buddhist, or of some older faith have encircled it, some bowing at every step, some falling prostrate, measuring the ground with their bodies; an outer ring for all, an inner and more perilous for those called by the priests to its greater penance. On another ring, higher yet, inaccessible to human feet, the Gods move in adoration. Still

greater numbers have known it from the *Mahabharata* or from the poetry of Kalidās, known that a tree covered with miraculous fruit rises from the lake at its foot, that sacred swans sing there, that the four great rivers of India rise there, with sands of gold, silver, emerald and ruby, that at certain seasons from the lake—here Dattātreyā is himself the speaker—springs a golden Phallos. Mānas Sarowar, the lake's full name, means "The great intellectual Lake", and in this Mountain, this Lake, a dozen races find the birth-place of their Gods and of themselves. We too have learnt from Dante to imagine our Eden, or Earthly Paradise, upon a mountain, penitential rings upon the slope.

VI

Shri Nātekār Swāmi visited other sacred places in the Himālayās before starting for Mount Kailās, travelling sometimes alone and almost always by unfrequented routes. He recalls the narrow escape of himself and his Nepālese guide in the Dehrādun Forest from an infuriated elephant, by dropping from a precipice to lie stunned at its foot; but once he had started, his travels record local customs, his pleasure in scenery, some occasional hardship—for a time little that one does not find in Ekai Kavizuchi's *Three*

Years in Tibet. Sometimes he and his three coolies sleep on the ground, sometimes in a temple or cave; sometimes there is difficulty about food, or about a mule or ass to carry it; sometimes he notices that the guest-house is full of fleas; once he is so cold he has to surround himself with lambs, two at his head, two at his back, and six or seven about the rest of his body. Sometimes he forms a brief friendship with a Tibetan official or fellow-pilgrim. Pilgrims for untold years doubtless have had such adventures. Now and then something reminds us that we accompany a holy man. Once he and his coolies were caught by a score of mounted robbers. For a moment he was dumb with terror, then he became suddenly calm, closed his eyes, turned towards Mount Kailās, bowed in adoration of his Master, sat down in the Yogi posture that is called *Padmasan* and waited in silence. The robbers fell silent also. Then one, the strongest and fiercest, asked his name and business, and what money he carried. He explained, or tried to explain by signs, that he was a pilgrim and had no money. The robber called four of the other robbers, said he would kill him and his coolies and take their clothes. Whereat Shri Nātēkār Śwāmi called upon the name of his Master, thrust his neck forward to await the blow of the sword, and went into meditation. When he awoke, his eyes wet with tears of adoration, the

robber was kneeling before him, his head upon his thumbs; the other robbers their swords sheathed, were fanning the swooning coolies.

At Lake Mānas Sarowar the supernatural begins to stir the pot. He had, according to his vow, to spend two weeks upon its bank, bathing twice a day in its icy water, taking but one meal a day, and at that nothing but the tea Tibetans mix with butter, and speaking not a word. At five in the morning of the last day of penance he heard a voice towards the west, the direction of Mount Kailās, a woman's voice as it seemed, singing the *Mandukya Upanishad's* description of the four states of the soul: the waking state corresponding to the letter "A", where physical objects are present; the dreaming state corresponding to the letter "U", where mental objects are present; the state of dreamless sleep corresponding to the letter "M" where all seems darkness to the soul, because all there is lost in Brahma, creator of mental and physical objects; the final state corresponding to the whole sacred word "AUM", consciousness bound to no object, bliss bound to no aim, *Turiya*, pure personality. He searched the shore but could find no one; even his binoculars showed it empty. He sent his coolies to inquire at the neighbouring monastery, but nobody could tell them of the singer. Then he paced the sands, thinking of the voice, but when he

had gone a hundred yards, was startled to see before him the print of a human foot. He told his coolies that they must gather up the baggage and follow, that he had set out for Mount Kailās. He followed the footprints for two or three miles along the south shore, but near the rocky western shore they grew indistinct and disappeared. He went on in the direction they had taken till stopped by an ascent too steep for his exhausted body.

After two days travelling, one day through storm and hail, spending the nights in a cave and in a foul hut made out of loose stones piled up on four sides, a great single slab for roof, he began his penitential circuit. At the eastern side the guide, pointing to a cave a thousand feet above his head, said that a great Hindu saint lived there, but that he knew no way to reach it. Shri Nātēkār Swāmi and the guide began to climb, but before they had gone a quarter of the way the guide was taken ill. The Swāmi told him to return to the coolies, that he and they must remain a week in a Buddhist guest-house, then if they heard nothing of their master, return to India.

The ice began fifty yards below the cave; that past, came a perpendicular cliff with notches for hand and foot cut in the rock, and seven feet from the bottom the mouth of the cave. He climbed, and crawling through darkness, found a dim lamp and an oldish

naked man, sitting upon a tiger's skin. He prostrated himself in reverence and said: "Lord, it is your grace that has brought this servant to your hallowed feet". The naked man laughed and said: "*Acha, Vatsa, Uthake baitho*", which means— "My darling, get up!" he was told that he might ask anything except for age, name and parentage. He asked in Hindi, Marāthi, in English, and the answer came always in the same language, perfect in grammar and accent. He noticed that whatever the language, that language alone was used, no foreign word admitted, and became convinced that his host knew all languages. It was he who had sung the *Mandukya Upanishad* and made those footprints on the sand, and it was because of that old acquaintance that he had called him darling. Shri Nārēkār Swāmi stayed there for three days, eating nothing, but drinking water, and during those three days his host neither ate nor drank. Then he returned to his coolies, and having told them to await for a week, set out alone for Gaurikund, a little lake high up upon Mount Kailās, wherein he was to cast sand from the southernmost point of India and so complete his pilgrimage. Pilgrims such as he perpetually encircle that religious India, which keeps Mount Kailās within its borders, that all the land may be blessed by their passing feet.

After two nights spent in hollows of the ice, his

overcoat about his head, his feet drawn up to his ribs, he came back defeated, but set out again the next day, and after a climb of five thousand feet, reached the lake, and there, twenty feet from the shore, broke through five feet of ice, cast in the sand, sat down, passed into meditation awaiting the object of his pilgrimage, the physical presence of his Divine Master, Dattatreya. He has described his uncertainty as to whether he would live or die, recorded the exact placing of his staff, what points of the compass he had first looked at, what words he spoke, his different postures, a tiger's skin that he had brought for his seat; details all settled by tradition. For three days he remained in meditation, gradually the mental image of his Master grew dim, voices spoke. Three times he heard the words: "O my child, O my dear", but he knew that if he opened his eyes while the mental image remained he would fail. What were voices to him if he could not see the physical form? At last the mental image suddenly vanished. He opened his eyes, and Dattatreya stood before him, made him perform certain further ceremonies, admitted him to the Giri order of Sanyāsins, promised to keep his heart from straying to physical things, and named him Hamsa, which means 'soul', but is also the name of those emblems of the soul, the white-winged, red-beaked, red-legged water-birds of Lake Mānas Sarowar.

VII

Shri Purohit Swāmi claims that his Master gained at that mountain lake, *Turiya*, whereas he himself had but gained upon Mount Girnār a dreamless sleep, *Sushupti*. The philosophy and technique of both of these states are described in the *Yoga-Sutras* or aphorisms of Patanjali, written somewhere between the third and fifth centuries of our era, but containing a far older tradition, or in the voluminous commentaries, written between the middle of the seventh and the ninth centuries. The Spirit, the Self that is in all selves, the pure mirror, is the source of intelligence, but Matter is the source of all energy, all creative power, all that separates one thing from another, not Matter as understood by Hobbes and his Mechanists, Matter as understood in Russia, where the Government has silenced the Mechanist, but interpreted with profound logic, almost what Schopenhauer understood by Will. If I think of the table on which I am writing, my mental image is as much Matter as the table itself, though of "a subtler kind", ¹ and I am able to think correctly, because the Matter I call Mind takes the shape of this or that physical object, and this Matter, physical and mental, has three aspects—"Tamas, darkness, frustration, *Rajas*, activity, passion, *Satva*, brightness, wisdom. In one of the

1 "Subtler", "finer", because it penetrates all things. Ordinary matter cannot go through the wall, mind can.

Patanjali commentaries there is a detailed analysis of the stages of concentration that would be Hegelian did they include the Self in their dialectic. The first is the fixing of attention upon some place or object, the navel, the tip of the tongue. Any object will serve so long as it belongs to oneself and is an immediate perception, not something inferred or heard of; or one may fix attention upon the form of some God, for a God is but the Self. But one cannot fix attention without some stream of thought, so if the object be the tongue, one thinks of the tongue as symbol or function. As I write the word, I think at once of Blake's "False Tongue" which is the "vegetative" sense, then I remember that according to Patanjali meditation upon the tongue awakens the perception of taste or colour or sound. The taste, colour and sound so perceived attains supernormal perfection as fact and idea draw together. Should one choose a God as the theme of meditation, the majesty of his face, or the beauty of his ear-rings, may, as trance deepens, express all majesty, all beauty. The second stage is this identity between idea and fact, between thought and sense; an identity that recalls the description of dreams in the *Upanishads*. The third stage is *Sushupti*, a complete disappearance of all but this identity. Nothing exists but that ravening tongue, ¹

¹ The tongue represents colour and sound, perhaps because the ascetic can see the point of nose or tongue, but not his eyes or ears.

or that majesty, that beauty; the man has disappeared as the sculptor in his statue, the musician in his music. One remembers the Japanese philosopher's saying, "What the artist perceives through a medium, the saint perceives immediately".

In the fourth stage the ascetic enters one or more of these stages at will and retains his complete memory when he returns; this is *Turiyā*, but as yet only in the form called *Savikalpa*; full *Turiyā* or seedless *Samādhi* comes when all these states are as a single timeless act, and that act is pure or unimpeded personality, all existence brought into the words: 'I am.' It resembles that last Greek number, a multiple of all numbers because there is nothing outside it, nothing to make a new beginning. It is not only seedless but objectless because objects are lost in complete light. Darkness is the causal body of existence. Objects are its serrates and dentures. One remembers those lines of Coleridge:

*'Resembles life what once was deemed of light,
Too ample in itself for human sight?
An absolute self—an element ungrounded—
All that we see, all colours of all shade,
By encroachment of darkness made?'*

VIII

If *Turiya* be attained, the ascetic may remain in Life until the results of past lives are exhausted or because he would serve his fellows. While such binding to the past remains, or duty to the living, it must, one would think, be incomplete, something less than absolute Self. Probably such an ascetic regards complete 'seedless' *Samadhi* as an ideal form, an all but unattainable ideal that he must approach through Life after Life: a central experience, touched or it may be but symbolised at some moment when some quality of Life flowers.

The life of an ascetic is a preparation for meditation. He repeats the name of some God thousands of times a day, frequents a shrine, is convinced that he must offer there all the devotion, all the passion aroused in his present life, or in his past lives by friend, master, child and wife. If he finds it impossible at once to transform sexual into spiritual desire, he may beseech the God to come as a woman. The God may send some strange woman as his emblem, but should he come himself, the ascetic wakes at dawn to find his empty bed fragrant with some temple incense, or patches of saffron paste upon his breast; but, whether the God send or come, every need soon fades, except that for unity with God. Nor is supernormal sense confined to the moments of concentration; he

will suddenly smell amid the ordinary occupations of life, perhaps in the middle of winter, an odour of spring flowers, or have an unimaginable sense of physical well-being that is described as a transformation of the sense of touch, or meet in empty places melodious sound, or a fine sight. I have been told that somewhere in India sits a musician into whose mouth pupils put food and drink. He was accustomed to listen to such sounds and imitate them, but one day the hand he had thrust out towards the string stopped in mid-air and became rigid; from that day he has remained drunk and lost in *Sushupti*.

The ascetic who has not freed his mind of ambition and passion may pass not into *Sushupti*, but into a distortion of the second stage of concentration, analogous to that of dreaming-sleep; sense and thought are one, but the bond between that unity and his ego remains unbroken. He is in the condition of the witches who project afar their passion-driven souls in some animal shape, while their bodies lie at home, or of that woman in Murasaki's book who killed, without knowing it, her enemy in a dream. On the other hand, the ascetic who has attained *Turiya*, enters this second stage wide awake, and as there is nothing outside his will, he can shape a new body to his need, or use the body of another. The old ascetic of the cavern was in this stage when he sang and left his

footsteps on the sand. Those who have attained 'seedless' *Samādhi*, are said to be physically immortal; they do not die, but make themselves invisible. The story-tellers describe them dissolving their bodies while they seem to bathe, or leaving, like Christ, an empty tomb: at will, they pass into the Source.

An ascetic who has rid himself of passion may, though unfitted for *Turiyā*, seek, like many Greeks, wisdom through those self-luminous and coherent dreams that seem to surround, like a ring of foam, the dark pool of dreamless sleep. If devoted to some God, or to some other image of the Universal Self, he may pass that ring, obtain *Sushupti* in its highest form, the dreamless sleep of the soul in God. When he returns to waking life, he is still an instrument of that other Will; those upon whom his attention falls may grow more fortunate, but his own fortune will be no better; a miracle may happen under his eyes, but, because it must be as though waking he still slept, he neither knows nor may enquire whether his sacrifice has played a part. He may even, as I imagine, be ignorant of common things, be somewhat childish as though he cannot see by daylight, resemble in all things the pure fool of European tradition. After death indeed he attains liberation, becoming one of those spirits that have no life but to obey that Self, who creates all things in dreamless sleep:

*'There is in God some say,
A deep but dazzling darkness: as men here
Say it is late and dusky, because they
See not all clear.
O for that Night, when I in him
Might live invisible and dim!'*

The ascetic seeking *Savikalpa-Samādhi* identifies it with *Satva*, but calls *Sushupti*, which he identifies with *Tamas*, the *Samādhi* of a fool, because in that state he is ignorant, and because he is liable to fall back upon it, as though sinking into lethargy, but he who thinks *Sushupti* the supreme self-surrender, must, I am persuaded, identify *Sushupti* with *Satva*, the waking life of sense with *Tamas*. *Savikalpa-Samādhi* is as it were, ringed with the activities of life, *Sushupti* ringed with dreams, and both rings are *Rajas*, while *Savikalpa-Samādhi* and *Sushupti* are alternatively light and darkness. Neither is in itself the final deliverance or return into the Source, for *Rajas*, *Tamas*, *Satva* constitute "matter", or "nature" without beginning, without reality. The Vedānt philosophers, unlike Buddha, direct our attention to bright or intelligible perfection, but seek timeless perfection, seedless *Samādhi*, beyond it in the isolated Soul, that is yet in all souls.

IX

In 1818 Hegel, his head full of the intellectual pride of the eighteenth century, was expounding History. Indifferent, as always, to the individual soul, he had taken for his theme the rise and fall of nations. Greece, he explained, first delivered mankind from nature; the Egyptian Sphinx, for all its human face, was Asiatic and animal; but when Œdipus answered the riddle, that sphinx was compelled to leap into the abyss; the riddle, "what goes first on four legs, then upon two, then upon three?" called up man. Nature is bondage, its virtue no more than the custom of clan or race, a plant rooted outside man, a law blindly obeyed. From that moment on, intellect or Spirit, that which has value in itself, began to prevail, and now in Hegel's own day, the climax had come, not crippled age but wisdom; there had been many rehearsals, for every civilisation, no matter where its birth, began with Asia, but the play itself had been saved up for our patronage. A few years more and religion would be absorbed in the State, art in philosophy, God's Will proved to be man's will.

I can imagine Balzac, that great eater, his medieval humility greater than his pride, answering: "Man's intellect or Spirit can do nothing but bear witness; Nature alone is active—I have heard the clergy talk of Grace, but that is beyond my knowledge—I

refuse to confine Nature to claw, paw and hoof. It is the irrational glory that reaches perfection at the mid-moment, at the Renaissance of every civilisation. Raphael and Michelangelo closed our sixth century, for our civilisation began when Romanesque displaced Byzantine architecture. Great empires are founded by lovers of women and of money; they are destroyed by men of ideas. There is a continual conflict—I too have my dialectic—the perfection of Nature is the decline of Spirit, the perfection of Spirit is the decline of Nature. In the Spiritual dawn when Raphael painted the *Camera Signatura*, and the Medician Popes dreamed of uniting Christianity and Paganism, all that was sacred with all that was secular, Europe might have made its plan, begun the solution of its problems, but individualism came instead; the egg instead of hatching burst. The *Peau de Chagrin*¹ and *Catherine de Medici* contain my philosophy of History. Genius and talent have torn Europe to pieces. *Divina Commedia* summed up and closed the Europe that created Mont Saint Michel, Chartres Cathedral, the Europe that went upon its knees or upon all fours. *Comédie Humaine* has closed the counter-movement, that kept her upon two legs.

¹ Hegel's lectures were not published until 1837, seven years after the publication of the "*Peau de Chagrin*." Balzac probably derived his thought from classical sources. It is more like Vico's than Hegel's.

In my open letter to the Duchess de Castries I foretell the future. What was before man stood up, an impulse in our blood, returns as an external necessity. We shall become one through violence or imitation; and, because we can no longer create, gather, as Rome did, the treasures of the world in some one place. As we grow old we accumulate abstract substitutes for experience, commodities of all kinds, but an old pensioner that taps upon the ground where he once crawled is no wit the wiser for all his proverbs. You should have gone to Hugo with that romantic dream. When I was young I wanted to take opium — Paris had just discovered it — but I could not, because I would not surrender my will. My *Comédie Humaine* will cure the world of all Utopias, but you were born too soon”.

That last sentence would have been untrue. Balzac’s influence has reached some exceptional men and women. Hegel’s Philosophy of History dominates the masses, though they have not heard his name, as Rousseau’s philosophy did in the nineteenth and later eighteenth centuries, and has shed more blood.

X

Here and there in the *Upanishads* mention is made of the moon’s bright fortnight, the nights from the

new to the full moon, and of the dark fortnight of the moon's decline. He that lives in the first becomes fire or an eater; he that lives in the second becomes fuel and food to the living (Schopenhauer's essay upon Love reversed). He that moves towards the full moon may, if wise, go to the Gods (expressed or symbolised in the senses) and share their long lives; or if to Brahma's question — "Who are you?" he can answer "Yourself", pass out of those three penitential circles, that of common men, that of gifted men, that of the Gods, and find some cavern upon Meru, and so pass out of all life. Upon the other hand, those that move towards the dark of the moon, if they are pious, as the crowd is pious, if they can offer the right sacrifices, pray at the right temples, can go to the blessed Ghosts, to the Heaven of their fathers, find what peace can be found between death and birth. The *Upanishads* denied any escape for these. The new thinkers arrayed their asceticism, their complete individuality against the tribal dancers, spirit mediums, ritual poetry, orgiastic ceremonies, soma-drinking priests of the popular religion: "As for living, our servants will do that for us." The bright fortnight's escape is *Turiya*, and in the dark fortnight, the ascetic who, unlike the common people, asks nothing of God or Ghost, may, though unworthy of *Turiya*, find *Sushupti* an absorption in God, as if the Soul were His food or fuel.

Man is born into "a mortal birth of twelve months or thirteen months", into the lunar year that sometimes requires an extra month that it may keep the proper seasons, from which it is plain that every incarnation is divided into twelve or thirteen cycles. As the first and last crescents are nearest the Sun, the visionary must have seen in those cycles a conflict between Moon and Sun, or when Greek astronomy had reached India, between a Moon that has taken the Sun's light into itself, "I am yourself", and the Moon lost in the Sun's light, between Sun in Moon and Moon in Sun. The Eastern poet saw the Moon as the Sun's bride; now in solitude; now offered to her Bridegroom in a self-abandonment unknown to our poetry. A European would think perhaps of the moonlit and moonless nights alone, call the increasing moon man's personality, as it fills into the round and becomes perfect, overthrowing the black night of oblivion. Am I not justified in discovering there the conflict between subjectivity and objectivity, between self and not self, between waking life and dreamless sleep?

The year of twelve or thirteen months that constitutes a single lifetime was thought of as a day or night in a still greater year, and that year divided in its turn into months, and so on until we reach some greatest year. One must imagine everywhere enclosed one within another, circles of Sun in Moon,

Moon in Sun. Mixed with these mythological or symbolic periods were others founded upon the astronomical phantasy of Greece. Certain cycles must have begun when all the planets stood toeing a line like young athletes. If the equinoctial Sun encircles the Zodiac in thirty-six thousand years, as Alexandrian Greece imagined, why not consider that but one month in a still greater year? Indifferent to history, India delighted in vast periods, which solemised the mind, seeming to unite it to the ageless Heavens. The Indian would have understood the dialectic of Balzac, but not that of Hegel — what could he have made of Hegel's optimism? — but never cared to discover in those great periods a conflict of civilisations and of nations. Even the Great Year of Proclus, though that is cold and abstract compared with the conception that has begun to flit before modern minds, was impossible to the Indian's imagination. Preoccupied with the seeds of action, discoverable by those who have rejected all that is not themselves, he left to Europe the study and creation of civilisation. This he could do, perhaps because the villages that nurtured his childhood were subject to no change but that of the seasons — their life, as it were, the symbolical syntax wherein we may write the History of the World.

II

Greek and Roman speculation generally made the Great Year solar, but the symbolism is little different. The two extremes correspond to the Sun's passage through Capricorn and Cancer. In the first the world was nourished by water— Philaus called it "the lunar water"; in the second by the "Fire of Heaven".

I find my imagination setting in one line *Turiyā*— full moon, mirror-like bright water, Mount Meru; and in the other *Sushupti*, moonless night, "dazzling darkness"— Mount Gīrnār.

Does not every civilisation as it approaches or recedes from its full moon seem as it were to shiver into the premonition of some perfection born out of itself, perhaps even of some return to its first Source? Does not one discover in the faces of Madonnas and holy women painted by Raphael or da Vinci, if never before or since, a condition of soul where all is still and finished, all experience wound up upon a bobbin? Does one not hear those lips murmur that, despite whatever illusion we cherish, we came from no immaturity, but out of our own perfection like ships that "all their swelling canvas wear". Does not every new civilisation upon the other hand, imagine that it was born in revelation, or that it comes from dependence upon dark or unknown powers, that it

can but open its eyes with difficulty after some long night's sleep or winter's hibernation?

"For this one thing above all I would be praised as a man,

*That in my words and my deeds I have kept those laws
in mind*

*Olymdian Zeus and this high clear Empyrean
Fashioned, and not some man or people of mankind,
Even those sacred laws nor age nor sleep can blind.*

. . . should a man forget

*The holy image, the Delphian Sybil's trance
And the world's navel stone, and not be punished for it
And seem most fortunate, or even blessed perchance,
Who could honour the Gods, or join the sacred dance."*

P.S — I have made much use during the writing of this essay of Shri Purohit Swāmi's *An Indian Monk* (Macmillan), of his unpublished translation of the *Yoga-Sutras* of Patanjali, and of the standard translation of the same work published by Harvard University. I thank Shri Purohit Swāmi for answering many questions.

Bhagwān Shri Hamsa was born at Dhulīā on the 15th. of June 1878. He was the younger son of

Pāṇḍu Tātyā Nātēkār, a well-known pleader. As he lost his mother at the age of four, his father and elder brother took care of him. When Pāṇḍu Tātyā learned from an astrologer that his son would become a Yogi, he forbade him to read the *Geetā* and found him a wife. He was married in his sixteenth year. But one day sitting on the banks of the Indrāyani at Dchu, he decided to renounce the world. He threw his European clothes into the river. He began to practise austerities; he read the *Guru-Charitra*, the Life of Dattātreya — repeated the *Gāyatri Mantram*, took milk for his sole food. After three and a half years of this life, he went on pilgrimage encircling the whole of India, and visited once every year Mount Gīrnār, where the footsteps of Dattātreya are shown to pilgrims. Then in 1908 he made the pilgrimage to Mount Kailās described in the following pages.

INTRODUCTION TO "MANDUKYA UPANISHAD."

I

When I wrote my introduction to *The Holy Mountain*, I did not analyse Bhagwān Shri Hamsa's vision by the frozen lake, and that has been heavy on my conscience. The culmination of the pilgrimage, it

should have been the culmination of my argument, but I shied away from it. Then after the publication of the book I asked Shri Purohit Swāmi if a passer-by, were one possible amid such desolation, could have seen the God. He said "No", and now that I was not compelled to assume a materialization like that which showed the medium and itself side by side and permitted Sir William Crookes to feel its beating heart, my intellect could begin its analysis. Analysis seemed important because of the connection, still vague in my imagination, between pilgrimage and vision, scenery and the pilgrim's salvation. Forty years ago my closest friend planned a walk through Ireland, a long stick with a head like the letter "T" in his hand, that he might preach the return of those ancient gods that seemed a part of the soil and the blood. Alarmed for his life; Irish Christianity is not gentle; I brought him to Sir Horace Plunkett who made him a successful organizer of co-operative banks. I have since regretted an action that entangled in practical discussion a mind ripe for spiritual theory. Judea had, he said, robbed all countries; men once thought their own neighbourhood holy, but had now to discover their Holy Land in an atlas. Yet all might be changed could he but discover three old men who lived somewhere in Ireland in a white thatched cottage, beside a telegraph post; or

could he but lie upon certain mountains until his soul sank down into the great lakes of spiritual fire under his feet. Was he a German Christian born too soon, or a Swedenborg I had turned from the road before his vision clarified? He was not as strange as he seems in memory; such ideas were in other Irish minds; I had made a map of ancient Ireland with the sacred places marked upon it in red ink, and Standish O'Grady had announced in his weekly Review that Slievenamon would yet be more famous than Olympus. An old Tory uncle used to say "everything that comes to Ireland becomes a reality"; the modern interest in folk-lore, a scientific curiosity elsewhere, had transformed our thought. And now compelled by that transfiguration, I must ask why Bhagwān Shri Hamsa had to go that pilgrimage and no other, and to meet his God amid such desolation upon Kailās.

II

Bhagwān Shri Hamsa, almost at the end of his journey, heard a spiritual voice:

'At 5 a. m. I heard strains of melodious music sung by a human voice coming from the west. In rapt attention I listened and thought it the voice of a woman. I decided, a little later, that the chant of Shri Māndukya Upanishad was being sung. Through

the binocular I searched in the direction from whence came the melodious sound, but saw no human figure on that beach of sand. I strained my eyes and gazed all round, but there was no trace of any human figure. The music lasted half an hour, then it ceased, and the incident began to trouble me. What could have been the meaning of this sweet chant of the Mandukya Upanishad in this solitary region?" Two days later a naked ascetic in a cavern claimed to have been present, singing, in his spiritual body. That shortest and the most comprehensive of the Upanishads examines the sacred syllables: "the word *Aum*, is the imperishable Spirit. This universe is the manifestation. The past, the present, the future, everything, is *Aum*, and whatever transcends this division of time, that too is *Aum*." Then the short paragraphs describe the letters; "*A*" is the physical or waking state; "*U*" the dream state, where only mental substances appear; "*M*" is deep sleep, where man "feels no desire, creates no dream", yet is this sleep called "conscious" because he is now united to sleepless Self, creator of all, source of all, unknowable, unthinkable, ungraspable, a union with it sole proof of its existence. The Self, where to man is now united, expressed by our articulation of the whole word, is the fourth state.

I have already compared these four states with the

four stages of concentration described by a commentator upon Patanjali; the first with the selection of some place, object or image, as the theme of meditation; the second with the mutual transformation, the drawing, as it were, together, of theme and thought, fact and idea; the dreamer creating his dream, the sculptor toiling to set free the imprisoned image; the third with the union of theme and thought, fact and idea so complete, that there is nothing more to do, nothing left but statue and dream; the sculptor has gone, the dreamer has gone, there is nobody even to remember that statue and dream are there; the mind is plunged in *Sushupti*, unconscious *Samādhi*. In its fourth state symbolical of or relevant to the Self, the mind can enter all or any of the previous states at will; joyous, unobstructed, it can transform itself, dissolve itself, create itself. It has found conscious *Samādhi*, passed beyond generation that is rooted always in the unconscious, found seedless *Samādhi*. It is the old theme of philosophy, the union of Self and Not-Self, but in the conflagration of that union there is, as in the biblical vision, "the form of the fourth".

III

At last, after a climb of 5000 feet Bhagwān Shri Hamsa sat by the frozen lake, awaiting initiation:

"My ideal was to have a sight of the physical form of the Lord Dattātreya Himself, and to get myself initiated into the realisation of the Self. I was determined either to realise this or to die in meditation while sitting in Yogic posture.

"I began by looking in all four directions and then spread my tiger's skin on the icy floor of the lake, planting my staff on the right. I again looked at the sky and at Mount Kailās, crying "Victory, Victory to the Lord, my Master!" I stood for a few minutes facing the north. After this I sat on the tiger's skin in the Siddhāsana posture, with my face towards the north. In short, I began to face the final ordeal. It was sunset. I closed my eyes and passed into meditation, all along trying to fix the mind steadily on a mental image of the Lord Dattātreya in the centre between my eyebrows.

"The first night I experienced terrible hardships. Bitter cold, piercing winds, incessant snow, inordinate hunger and deadly solitude combined to harass the mind; the body became numb and unable to bear the pangs. Snow covered me up to my breast and, till after midnight, I was fighting desperately with my mind. . . .

"Every moment increased the intensity of my yearning to see my Master, and it was while I was in this state that I thought I heard a voice. I did not leave

my meditation. Later on I found that the image which formed the subject of my meditation grew more and more dim. Yet I refused to allow my mind to leave its point of concentration; instead I fixed it there with added determination.

“O my child! O my dear!” I heard these words thrice, but did not open my eyes, for the mental image of my Master was still there between the eyebrows. I wanted to see the Lord Dattātreya in physical form, and naturally it was impossible for me to be satisfied with His voice alone. Moreover, no sight of a physical form was possible until the mental one had disappeared. As I was so keen about the physical sight, I did not leave my meditation, though I heard the call three times.

“At last, all of a sudden, the mental form disappeared. Automatically my eyes were opened and I saw, standing before me, the Lord Dattātreya, my Master, in his physical form. At once I prostrated myself on the icy ground like a staff and placed my head on His lotus-feet.

“Three days had passed like three moments for me! My Master lifted me up like the Divine Mother and hugged me to His breast and caressed me all over the body. Thereafter He gave me the Mantra (sacred words) and initiated me into the realization of the Self. What a great bliss it was! I cannot describe that joy, as it is beyond any description through words.”

IV

This final vision is that form completed in the third state, the third stage, not as it appears in dreamless sleep but as it appears in the fourth state, the fourth stage, or to conscious man. When the ascetic meditates upon the tip of his tongue, let us say, he begins with an object, and this object slowly transforms and is transformed by his thought until they are one. When he meditates upon an image of God, he begins with thought, God subjectively conceived, and this thought is slowly transformed by, and transforms its object, divine reality, until suddenly superseded by the unity of thought and fact. Yet he is not aware of all this, there is a voice that would persuade him to open his eyes too soon, the event is unforeseen, has taken place in what we call, because we sit in the stalls and watch the play, the unconscious. The Indian, upon the other hand, calls it the conscious, because, whereas we are fragmentary, forgetting, remembering, sleeping waking, spread out into past, present, future, permitting to our leg, to our finger, to our intestines, partly or completely separate consciousness, it is the "unbroken consciousness of the Self", the Self that never sleeps, that is never divided, but even when our thought transforms it, is still the same. It is the Universal Self but also that of a civilisation; to Bhagwān Shri Hamsa, Dattātreyā

is the object, or goal, not of his pilgrimage only, but of his whole life. But we must not think of it as a target, as something struck or seized when subject or object unite, but as the sole being that is completely alive, completely active; our approach is revelation. The pilgrim has meditated, prayed, fasted, almost met his death in snow and ice, strained his heroic will to the utmost, fragments of his consciousness have lived in suffering for months, perhaps for years, but the Self has brought the event, the supreme drama, out of its freedom, and this revelation, because the work of unlimited power, has been sudden. The Mantra, the sacred fire that he must presently light, the caress given to all parts of his body, are from the memory of the race, the immemorial ritual; but "the initiation into the reality of the Self" is wordless, unique, an act of the unbroken consciousness alone. For this initiation Bhagwān Shri Hamsa finds only technical language:

"Manas (mind) merged into Antahkarana (heart); the Antahkarana with the Manas merged into the Chitta (mind-stuff); the Chitta along with Antahkarana and Manas merged into Buddhi (intellect); the Buddhi with Chitta, Antahkarana and Manas merged into Ahankar (egoism); and the Ahankar along with Buddhi, Chitta, Antahkarana and Manas — all merged into the Absolute Brahma! I found myself reflected everywhere in the whole Universe!"

V

The Heart is unity, harmony. The Mind is no more to be occupied with external events, it must, as it seems, turn upon itself, be occupied with itself, but that is impossible, for the Discursive Mind must by its nature pursue something, find something. It seemed as if its separation from external things, its union with itself, must be accompanied rather than followed by its union with Chitta. It is Chitta, perhaps, which most separates Indian from European thought. We think of man, his ideas and concepts facing external nature, or as fashioning that nature according to those ideas and concepts from unknown material or from nothing. Chitta is mental substance, mind-stuff is the more usual translation, and this substance must always take its shape from something; it is, as we would say, suggestible, it must copy some external object or symbolize the universal Self. If I shut my eyes and try to recall table and chair, I see them as transformations of the Chitta. Indeed, the actual table and chair are but the Chitta posited by the mind, the personality, in space, where because two things cannot occupy the same space, there is discord and suffering. By withdrawing into our own mind we discover the Chitta united to Heart and therefore pure. It is divided into Tamas, or heaviness, exhaustion; Rajas, or passion, violence, movement;

Satva, or wisdom, peace, beauty. Or we can sum up all as darkness, lightning, light, Boehme's three. Because Satva reflects the Self, from it, or from it united to Rajas come all works of wisdom and beauty. When those dreams created by recent or present physical events, are absent from our dreams Discursive Mind is united to Chitta, and this Chitta is not isolated, as we think subjective mind is isolated; in so far as Satva reflects the Self, it is common to all whose minds contain the same reflection: the images of the gods can pass from mind to mind, our closed eyes may look upon a world shared, as the physical world is shared, though difference in the degree of purity has been substituted for difference of place.

Buddhi is described as that which "distinguishes" between Tamas, Rajas, Satva that it may cling to Satva, but "distinguishes" suggests Discursive Mind; perhaps it instantly recognises and clings. But it is confined to form, for even when most transparent, Chitta is form, the third state, the third concentration, are still in form. Then Manas, Heart, Chitta, Buddhi, are united to egoism, or personality, as it should be called. Personality is first of all the man as he has been made by his Karma; he is set in the external world because that, too, has been made by his Karma. Even though initiation be complete, his nature so gathered up into itself that he can create

no new Karma, he must await the exhaustion of the old. In pure personality, seedless Samādhi, there is nothing but that bare "I am" which is Brahma. The initiate, all old Karma exhausted is "The Human Form Divine" of Blake, that Unity of Being Dante compared to a perfectly proportioned human body; henceforth he is self-creating. But the Universal Self is a fountain, not a cistern, the Supreme Good must perpetually give itself. The world is necessary to the Self, must receive "the excess of its delights", and in this Self all delivered selves are present, ordering all things, from the pole star to the passing wind. They are indeed those spirits Shelley imagined in his *Adonais* as visiting the inspired and the innocent.

VI

Bhagwān Shri Hamsa knew that he must not open his eyes while "the mental image" of his Master "was still there between the eyebrows", though that Master himself, trying him to the utmost, spoke endearing words. Had he opened his eyes too soon, he would have seen nothing. Before we can see objective truth we must exhaust subjective. This exhaustion, expressed in the drama of master and disciple, had been going on all his life, the perilous pilgrimage but a climax. To seek God too soon is

not less sinful than to seek God too late; we must love, man, woman, or child, we must exhaust ambition, intellect, desire, dedicating all things as they pass, or we come to God with empty hands.

VII

An Indian devotee may recognize that he approaches the Self through a transfiguration of sexual desire; he repeats thousands of times a day words of adoration, calls before his eyes a thousand times the divine image. He is not always solitary, there is another method, that of the Tantric philosophy, where a man and woman, when in sexual union, transfigure each other's images into the masculine and feminine characters of God, but the man must not finish, vitality must not pass beyond his body, beyond his being. There are married people who though they do not forbid the passage of the seed practise, not necessarily at the moment of union, a meditation, wherein the man seeks the divine Self as present in his wife, the wife the divine Self as present in the man. There may be trance, and the presence of one with another though a great distance separates. If one alone meditates, the other knows; one may call for and receive through the other; divine protection. Did this worship, this meditation, establish among us romantic

love, was it prevalent in Northern Europe during the twelfth century? In the German epic *Parsifal* Gawain drives a dagger through his hand without knowing it during his love-trance, Parsifal falls into such a trance when a drop of blood upon snow recalls to his mind a tear upon his wife's cheek, and before he awakes overthrows many knights. When riding into battle he prays not to God but to his wife, and she, falling into trance, protects him. One thinks too, of that mysterious poem by Chrétien de Troyes, wherein Vivien having laid Merlin, personification of wisdom, by the side of dead lovers, closes their tomb.

VIII

I think it certain that Europeans, travelling the same way, enduring the same fasts, saying the same prayers, would have received nothing but perhaps a few broken dreams. Bhagwān Shri Hamsa's evocation of "the conscious", of "the unconscious", depended in part upon innumerable associations from childhood on, in part upon race memory. I have read somewhere that the Aryan race, afterwards the creator of the Vedas and the Upanishads, lingered long, perhaps for many generations, in the country about Kailās, or Mount Meru as it is called in the Vedas, certainly

longer than the Children of Israel about Sinai. Who knows what beginning, what act of creation, is commemorated in that legend of a golden phallus rising once in every year from the waters of Manas Sarowar, or to what source Bhagwān Shri Hamsa, like many before, like many that will come after, made his perilous journey, not what his dreams, or his undreaming sleep recalled?

Though I have to thank Shri Purohit Swāmi for answering many questions, he must not be held responsible for my conclusions.

Here ends "Essays 1931-1936" by William Butler Yeats. Three hundred copies of this book have been printed and published by Elizabeth Corbet Yeats, (on paper made in Ireland) at The Cuala Press, 133 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin, Ireland. Finished in the last week of October, nineteen hundred and thirty seven.

